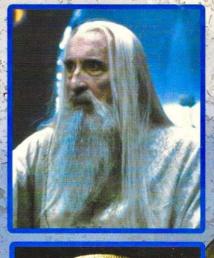
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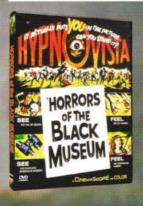
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COVER: THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957) by Bill Chancellor, THE LORD OF THE RINGS (2002), THE FACE OF FU MANCHU (1965)

Scarlet Letters

Thank you so much for Ken Hanke's good words about my film USHER in the latest issue of *Scarlet Street* (#43).

It was so nice to see Tom Amorosi and Richard Valley in Baltimore. Perhaps you'll be here for Forry Ackerman's gala birthday celebration this year, in which case I'll see you again then. Again, my thanks and appreciation.

Curtis Harrington Hollywood, CA

Tom and I had the great pleasure of dining with Curtis at the Fanex convention last August. Unfortunately, we weren't able to make it to Uncle Forry's birthday bash in November, which was especially disappointing since Scarlet Street received one of the first of the soon-to-be-legendary 4E Awards. (See this issue's Frankly Scarlet.)

Ken Hanke has "done it again" in Scarlet Street #43 with his keen appreciation of Columbia Pictures' horror history by including the relatively obscure titles that preceded Karloff's THE BLACK ROOM and Mad Doctor series. Would that Columbia could be persuaded to follow through and release its horror library, perhaps like Universal is now doing by combining two titles on one DVD. How about a Karloff together with a lesser-known title on each disc?

When Anglo-Amalgamated was making its one-hour Edgar Wallace mysteries in England, THE FEATHERED SERPENT was under consideration, but the rights could not be cleared, presumably because Columbia still owned the property virtue of THE MENACE. The most extraordinary thing about THE NINTH GUEST when viewed today is its much more than coincidental resemblance to Agatha Christie's Ten Little Indians (originally published as Ten Little Niggers). It's hard to believe that Ms. Christie ever had to resort to borrowing from other writer's plots, but the similarities in this instance are too many and too great. I agree with Hanke about the excessive footage devoted to Vince Barnett's drunk act, although Barnett was one of Hollywood's most popular character actors from the 1930s onwards; one of his most memorable appearances was in Paul Muni's SCARFACE.

It's fascinating to consider BLACK MOON as an inspiration for I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE. Usually it's been credited to the novel Jane Eyre. Concerning THE MAN WHO LIVED TWICE and the 1935 THE RAVEN, that theme was also explored by George Cukor in his film A WOMAN'S FACE with Joan Crawford, although not until many years later.

I like Rob Van Gessel's suggestion for a feature story on the works of H.G. Wells. Perhaps it could be combined with an appreciation of J.B. Priestly, another English author, and contemporary of Wells, who not only was the source for

James Whale's THE OLD DARK HOUSE, but also wrote the eerie fantasy *An Inspector Calls*, which was made into an outstanding film with Alastair Sim, and a lesser-known fantasy entitled THEY CAME TO A CITY.

Richard Gordon Gordon Films, Inc. New York, NY

Scarlet Street #43's conclusion of The Pictures of Dorian Gray by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley was on a par with previous installments—namely, the best genre writing I've seen this year! The article, the accompanying interviews, and the delightfully varied array of photographs were all a wonder to behold. I've never understood how two writers could collaborate on a project and have the final result appear so seamless, but whatever the secret Ms. Loban and Mr. Valley have definitely unlocked it. I hope they

work together again sometime. Bill Donnelly Columbus, OH

I just wanted to mention how much I enjoyed *Scarlet Street #43*. Loved the added color inside. I think the new logo looks great and jumps out at me in a very vivid bloody red!

I always enjoy the reviews. I guess what I like most about *Scarlet Street* is it keeps me in touch with so much that is going on out there. I can't keep track of

all the latest releases and it is really a help to catch your reviews. Also, the wide variety of entertainment

Also, the wide variety of entertainment covered is appreciated. Sure, I may have my personal favorites, but even if I'm not totally into everything covered, I still enjoy reading about it. I think that says something about your writing and presentation! (Yes, I can't forget the layout. It's inventive and eye-catching.) For example, I really enjoy reading about the little-known horrors out there like those covered in Ken Hanke's COLUMBIA HOR-RORS article. Yet I also have learned more about THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY and SHE than I ever would have imagined, thanks to the articles by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley! (I also liked the Road Picture coverage last issue too!)

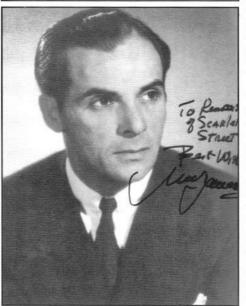
You guys truly go where no mag has gone before and it is much appreciated! Keep going!

John Stoskopf Redford Township, MI

Scarlet Street #43 continues an unbroken string of first-class issues, which began with . . . well, which began with the first issue of Scarlet Street! (Yes, I've been reading and collecting for that long!) The color is a striking addition, especially the lovely page with Boris Karloff as the Frankenstein Monster. (It didn't hurt that it illustrated Harry H. Long's well-written and perceptive review of Universal monster movies on DVD.) It was also a treat to find the return of Ross Care's Record Rack column, which has been absent too long. Dare I hope for the return of another Scarlet Street veteran: Our Man on Baker Street's David Stuart Davies?

If you'll allow me one minor caveat, I was slightly disappointed by the almost complete absence of interviews this issue. Michael R. Thomas' conversation with makeup man Dick Smith was fine and informative, but I've been spoiled by past issues, which have run the best interviews I've ever read. Scarlet Street is unequaled in combining interviews with articles about the person's work, and also in "teaming" an interview with an interview with one of the person's coworkers. I fondly recall such past "team-ups" as Phyllis Kirk and Paul Picerni, Roddy McDowall and Stephen Geoffreys, Ann Doran and Dabbs Greer, Jack Larson and Noel Neill, and two memorable "tripleheaders": Anne Jeffreys, Robert Sterling,

WANTED! MORE MOBSTERS LIKE...



Marc Lawrence

Continued on page 8



plus the original text including THE FLASH, PERRY MA-SON, DARK SHADOWS, PSYCHO



#2(Reprint): HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM, ATLANTIS FLASH, SUPERBOY, PERRY MA-SON, DARK SHADOWS, Golden

Take a Walk on the Wild Side . .





#3(Reprint): THE MAD DOCTOR Martin Kosleck, John Howard, THE LODGER, NIGHT OF THE HUNTER, BATMAN, Horror Ital-



#4: Christopher Lee, RETURN OF DRACULA, Forrest J Ackerman, Zacherley, Gerard Christopher BURN WITCH BURN, WEIRD



#5: Jack Larson, Barbara Hale, Christopher Lee, Patrick Macnee, Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED,



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Brown, Yvette Vickers, TOMB OF LIGEIA, Joan Hickson, BLUE BEARD, Elizabeth Shepherd, THE



#8: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Jeremy Brett, Rosalie Wills.STOKER'SDRACULA.Johr



#9: Richard Denning, Joan Ben-nett, Thomas Beck, CHARLJE CHAN AT THE OPERA, Peter Cushing, Veronica Carlson, THE



ine, Beverly Garland, THE ALLI-GATOR PEOPLE, THE HARDY BOYS, TEN LITTLE INDIANS.



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man Cohen, IT! THE TERROR, Ian Murray, WHO KILLED TEDDY BEAR?, Gary Conway, Don John-son, THE SKULL, and more!



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#20: Deborah Kerr, Martin Steph-ens, Russ Tamblyn, Jeremy Brett, Mitch Pileggi, and mor



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Lawrence Tierney, Film Noir Classics, MORETALESOFTHECITY, Ian Richardson, NO WAY TO TREAT A LADY, and more!



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#31: NIGHTMARE ALLEY, Coleen Gray, NIAGARA, David Manners, Warner Bros. Film Music, Basil Rathbone, Alfred Hitchcock Remakes, Film Noir, and more!



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Norma Eberhardt, THE RETURN OF DRACULA, THE MUMMY, FRANKENSTEIN, Ed Wood, THE TALENTEDMR, RIPLEY, and n



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#38: Anne Jeffreys, Robert Sterling DVD, THE AVENGERS, Val Lew-



#39: Curt Siodmak, Gene Evans FROM PLANET AROUS. THE X-FILES, THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU, and more



#40: Matt Frewer, Vincent Sherman RETURN OF DOCTOR X, THE HOUNDOFTHEBASKERVILLES, Film Noir Classics, ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKEN-



#41: Hurd Hatfield, Helmut Ber ger, Curt Siodmak, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, Horror Italian Style, AIP's Beach Party flicks on DVD, SHE, THE BEAST WITH



#42: Shane Briant, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, Ursula Andress, SHE, Curtis Harrington's HOUSE OF USHER, FRANKEN-STEIN ANDME, The Road Pictures,



#43: THEBLACK ROOM, NIGHT OF TERROR, THE PICTURE OF DORIANGRAY, SHE, Dick Smith, Universal Horrors on DVD, Mar-



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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

and Kathleen Freeman, and Francis Lederer, Norma Eberhardt, and Ray Stricklyn. (Although they were spread out over a few issues, you even topped your "threesomes," with interviews with STRANGERS ON A TRAIN stars Farley Granger, Ruth Roman, Patricia Hitchcock, and Kasey Rogers!) Please don't abandon this practice! It's unique to Scarlet Street and raises your publication above all others.

Joyce Labbatte San Diego, CA

Fear not, Joyce! We know the value of our interviews and the manner in which they're presented. In this very issue, you'll find Christopher Lee reunited with his former producer, Harry Alan Towers. And we've got some surprises in store for upcoming issues

The new format (color!) looks great. Usually magazines with high-quality editorial content like *Scarlet Street* add a little flair at the expense of that very content: not so in this case (at least what I have seen so far)! Well done!

Great recap deserving of applause by Richard Valley (Frankly Scarlet), dealing with how his life (and the lives of those around him) were affected—as we all were—by September 11th. Like Richard, I also take umbrage with the "life has been changed forever" mentality that was immediately forced upon us all. Of course, we will not forget, but life (for the most part) is essentially only changed if we permit it to be changed. I crossed the

border from Canada only days later to attend the Cinema Wasteland convention in Ohio on September 15th, and was the better for it. I refuse to let these soulless miscreants affect my life any more than they already have.

The atmosphere amongst all who attended the Cinema Wasteland show was, needless to say, noticeably more subdued than a normal film convention. However, all who attended to whom I spoke felt better for having been there. Full marks to those in charge for persevering with the weekend's festivities.

While it may have taken a while to get into the swing of the show, in no time at all everyone was reveling in the usual madness, scouring through videos and DVDs, pouring over movie posters and magazines (SS, of course!), as well as trying to get the best prices on the latest toys and collectibles. No one for a moment forgot what had happened only days earlier-it was understandably a reoccurring topic of conversation-and it was noted that no movie shown that weekend could ever come close to matching the horror of earlier in that week. Still, surrounding ourselves by all the "fake death" (as another attendee put it) was at least a temporary tonic that did several hundred of us very well indeed. By the end of the weekend, I was more than a little saddened to have to reenter the real world, with its all-too-ghastly images of the smoking New York City and Washington, D.C. Then again, I also had some good old-fashioned fake monstrosities in

hand to help cushion the blow. I took two mummy movies and, yes, did indeed feel better in the morning.

Keep up the good work! Mike Michalski Windsor, ON, Canada

Because I've been a lifelong admirer of the film work of Anthony Perkins, and because I'm of the opinion that he has been underappreciated, I was very grateful for Lelia Loban and Richard Valley's Part Three of The Pictures of Dorian Gray (SS #43), in which they resurrected the reputation of his 1983 telefilm, THE SINS OF DORIAN GRAY and offered a favorable response to his performance. Only a month later, Perkins would appear on the big screen in the surprisingly successful sequel to PSYCHO-PSYCHO II-and offer a heartbreaking performance of an older and wiser Norman Bates. In the following year, in another big-screen event-the much-cut Ken Russell film, CRIMES OF PASSION-Perkins would give one of the great performances of his lengthy film career, as the demented and frightening Reverend Peter Shayne. (Like his famous performance in Alfred Hitchcock's PSYCHO, it benefited from a great deal of input by the actor himself).

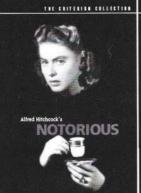
Perkins is forever remembered for his work in PSYCHO, to the detriment of his many other achievements in his film career. Although he was not nominated for an Academy Award for PSYCHO, he nev-

Continued on page 12

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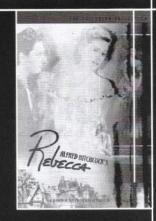


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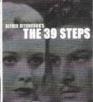






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NIGHT OF THE BLOOD BEAST (1958) Michael Em Ed Nelson. A spaceship returns to Earth carrying an astro-een impregnated with alien embryos, also on board is a hor conster that terrorizes a group of research scientists in in In laboratory. A great Comman AIP production. 16mm. \$1400

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He finds himself slowly transforming into a hortfole, two-headed monster.
The leye coming out of his shoulder scene is a gern. 16mm. \$0610
TEEN AGENS EPOM CHITER SPACE (1859). Design Leve. Design he 'eye coming out of his shoulder' scene is a gem. 16mm. S061D TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE (1959) David Love, Dawn

TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE (1959) David Love, Dawn Anderson. A gang of marauding leenage alleins plan to use earth as the breeding ground for a species of monsters that look like giant lobsters. One of the alleins turns on his comrades and flees. His companions go on a ray gun rampage tying to track him down. From 16mm. 5082D THE WASP WOMAN (1959) Susan Cabot, Fred, Eisley, Michael Mark. A scientist develops a youth-restoring beauty cream for the aging head of a cosmetics firm. To her armazement, she finds that it works! One problem, though, she also finds herself occasionally changing into a horinise, wasp-like monster with a lust for killing. From 16mm. 5051D BATTLE OF THE WORLDS (1960) Claude Rains, Bill Carter. Earth is threatened with destruction by a runaway planet controlled by a glant computer. Beautiful cinematography with excellent special effects and nice outer space scenes for its time. Gorgeous color. 16mm. 5063D THE PHANTOM PLANET (1961) Dean Fredericks, Coleen Gray, Dolores Falth, Anthory Dexter. A very underrated sci-f. 8 film about an

Clores Falth, Anthony Dexter. A very underrated act.-IB film about an astronaut who's stranded on an invisible planet. There, he finds a race of miniature people menaced by a fleet of marauding, alien. A wonderful stock sci-fi music score. Great fur throughout. From 16mm, 30650

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DIABOLICAL DR. Z (1965) Howard Vernon, Mabel Karr, Estella Blain. The opening sequence of this film will give you a real jolt. The Daughter of a mad scientist seeks revenge against those who spurmed his scientific ideas. Directed by Jess Franco. From 55mm. 19810 CASTLE OF FU MANCHU (1972) Christopher Lee, Richard

Greene, Maria Perschy, Tsai Chin, directed by Jess Franco. A cruisi liner is sunk in the Caribbean by an iceberg? Fu Manchu has a supe weapon that freezes large bodies of water. His plan is to rule the work and his next target is Istanbul. Recommended. Color, 35mm. S233D





HORROR THRILLERS

MYSTERIOUS MR. WONG (1935) Bela Lugosi, Wallace Ford, Affine Judge. Critics have been unkind to this film that contains one of Bela's meather villain roles. He has some priceless dislogue as he plays a madman seeking the legendary coins of Confucius. 16mm. L08BD THE APE (1940) Boris Karloff, Maris Witxon, Henry Hall. Mad Scientist Bors roams around the countryside in an ape suit killing people for their spinal fluid. A very unusual and rural type of feel and setting give his kittle Monogram horror film an extra boost. From 16mm. K097D DEVIL'S PARTHER (1958) Edwin Nelson, Edgar Buchannon, Jean Allison, Richard Crane. A strange man comes to claim his inheritance in a small desert town, bringing with him satanic rites, evil spells and death he also has occasion to change himself into various wild animals when killing off his enemies! Chilling and atmospheric. 35mm. H038D THE GHOST (1963) Barbara Steele, Peter Baldwin. The chilling sequel to HORRIBLE DR HICHCOCK. Barbara and her lover plan the murder of her husband, Dr. Hichcock, who somehow survived his fall off the stainwell in the first film. They kill him, but is he really dead? A great close-up of Barbara laughing maniacaby. Technicolor, 35mm. B504D HORROR CASTLE (1963) Christopher Lee, George Riviere. A wonderful horror film. A beautiful lady finds hersell terrified inside her hubby's creepy, cumbing castle. It seems the phost of a medieval torture maniac called 'The Punisher' is on the loose and killing off people in a variety of gristy ways. Highly recommended. Color. 16mm. R256D WEREWOLF in A GIRLS' DORMITORY (1963) Barbara Lass, Carl Schell, Curt Lowens. A creepy, gothic tale about a snarfing werewolf on the provide at a girls' reform school. Suspicion fails upon a new teacher after a horrible, animal-like slaying takes place. Is he really the writer of his brother. Chris is later found dead, but his ghost comes back to haunt the castle. A top-notch fatilian horror thiller. This is the uncut, American theatrical release version. Technicolor, 35mm. H207D

moreon THE LIVING AND DEAD CHANGE PLACES IN AN ORGY OF TERROR IN EDGAR ALLAN POES BARBARA STEELE - GEORGE RIVIERE A WOOLNER BROS. RELEASE

CASTLE OF BLOOD (1964) Barbara Steele, George Riviere. An excellent horror film about a writer who accepts a bet that he'll be alive in the morning after spending the night in a haunted castle. Top notch, supernatural horror as Barbara portrays a tortrad member of the living dead. Barbara's best film? Highly recommended. 35mm. H111D NIGHTMARE CASTLE (1965) Barbara Steele, Paul Miller. Wowl A doctor tortures and murders his unfaithful wide and her lover, but they return from the dead for revenge. Barb's acid-eaten face is unforgettable in the films shocking claims? One of Steele's best. From 16mm. B596D KILL, BABY, KILL (1966) Erica Blanc, Max Lawrence, Fabienne Dalii. The ghost of a young pirt takes revenge on villagers who caused her death. Swirling mists, cobwebbed rooms, black cats, shadowy figures. An incredible film you don't want to miss. Color, 16mm. H087D THE EMBALMER (1996) Maureen Brown, Gin Mart. A horrible field is loose under the streets of Venice. He pulls young girts into the murky canals that catacomb the sewers of the ancient thaina noty. He kins and "stuffs" them, adding them to his griety collection of human statues that adom the walls of his underground lair. Recommended, 35mm, H210D ENTER THE DEVIL (1972) Irane Kelly, Josh Bryant, David Cass.

ENTER THE DEVIL (1972) Irene Kelly, Josh Bryant, David Çass, eople are disappearing in the wastelands. An occult researcher issovers that a devil-worshipping cut it responsible. Her inquiries lead er into great danger. Gritty and atmospheric. Color, 16mm. M293D

A MAD, SADISTIC SCIENTIST ON THE LOOSE!



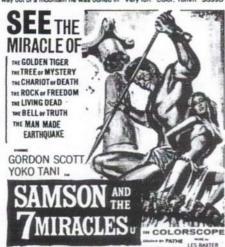
_BARBARA STEELE -

SWORD & SANDAL

HERCULES (1959) Steve Reeves, Sylva Koscina, randdaddy of muscleman movies, cataputted Steve Ree Iniverse to mythic hero. Based on the Greek tale droponauts. A great color fantasy. From 16mm. SS31D

Argonauts. A great color fantasy. From 16mm. SS31D DAVID AND GOLIATH (1961) Orson Welles, Ivo Payer, Ele Rossi Drago, Kronos. The classic retelling of the David and Goliath fable. Welles is colorful--even if a bit hammy--as King Saul. Payer is a very masculine David, not the usual weaking type as portrayed in other filmed rersions. Kronos plays Goliath. Color, from 16mm \$575D SAMSON AND THE 7 MIRACLES OF THE WORLD (1962)

cont. Yoko Tani. Samson fights against a murdering horde of priors while trying to save the life of a pretty Chinese princess. climax has Samson causing an earthquake while digging his I a mountain he was buried in Very fun. Color, 18mm. SS59D



JURGLE TREATURES

EAST OF BORNEO (1931, 'Universal) Charles Bickford. Rose Hobart. A fantastic jungle chiller! Hobart arrives at Morudu, a lost city of ancient temples and glant stone lobs. The climax is unforpettable as a nearby voicano erupts and spews forth stone, ash, and boiling hot lava down upon the city. Our highest recommendation! From 18mm. J002D JUNGLE MAN (1941, aka DRUMS OF AFRICA) Buster Crabbe. Chas. Middleton, Shella Darcy. Weldon Heyburn. Crabbe is a jungle doctor in a jungle village plagued by fever and headhuriters. Heyburn is on safari lobing for the city of the dead. PRC jungle fun. 16mm J062D LIANE, JUNGLE GODDESS (1956) Marion Michael, Hardy Kruser. A lopless, beautiful write is given is found in the wilds of Africa.

ruger. A topiess, beautiful white siren is found in the wilds of Africa ring with a native tribe. It's thought she may be the lost relative of an inglish noble. A play off the Greystoke legend. Color, 35mm. J042D



EXPLOITATION

THE VIOLENT YEARS (1956) Jean Moorhead, Barbara Weeks, Timothy Farrell, scripted by Ed Wood. This film is total, complete hilarity from start to finish. A gang of typical Ed Woods in theenage broads go on a crime rampage. The 'rape' scene involving the gang girls and a young teenage guy is priceless. Not to be missed. From 35mm. X0240 THE SINISTER URGE (1960) Kenne Duncan, James Moore, Jean Fontaine, Dino Fantini. Ed Wood's campy expose of the smut picture racket reeks of his usual bwisted, inept genius. Police by to track down a sex killer and put an end to the smut picture business that inspired his hideous crime. Ed, himself appears in a fight scene. 35mm. X0700 COMMON LAW WIFE (1963) Lucy Kelly, Annabelle Lee, George Edgely, A brick-house sex kilten makes the move on elderly Uncle Shug, who showers her with money in return for 'companionship.' Uncle Shug, who showers her with money in return for 'companionship.' Uncle Shug, kicks out his long-time common law wife. The fur really files after that An amazing cheaple that we highly recommend. From 35mm. X063D SHANTY TRAMP (1966) Lee Holland, Kenneth Douglas, Lewis Galen. A sleazy evangelist puts the move on a small lown shanly tramp. She then makes a move on a local black lidi, which later gets him killed after her drunken pappy walks in on them (she starts crying rapel). Holland, who plays the shanly tramp, is an absolute knockout, a real bombshell with a perfect hour-glass figure. A must! 35mm. X067D

JUVENILE SCHLOCK

HOT ROD GIRL (1959) Lori Nelson, Mark Andrews, Chuck Connors. Teenage terrorists on a speed-crazy rampage? Connors plays a cop who sets up a hot-rod racing program to aid young delinquents. See crack-ups, chicken runs and street dragging. Great drive-in schlock from AIP. From 16mm. JS01D

T-BIRD GANG (1959) John Brinkey, Tony Miller. "Fast cars, fast girts, and no place to gol? A high school graduate joins up with a juvenile gang out to averge his dad's marder. From 16mm, JS03D.

BEAT GIRL (1960) Gillian Hills, Christopher Lee, Oliver Reed, Noeile Adam. Probably the best British JD movite ever made. Hills plays a gorgeous but rebelikous teenage girl who has beatnik friends, goes to wild parties, and does strip tease for the local youth in addition to becoming involved in a brutal murder. A juvenile schlock classic. 16mm, JS10D

MARRIED TOO YOUNG (1962) Harold Lloyd, Jr., Anthony Dexter, Jana Lund, Marianna Hill. Partially scripted by Ed Wood. The story Jana Lund, Marianna Hill. Partially scripted by Ed Wood. The story

Jana Lund, Marianna Hill. Partially scripted by Ed Wood. The stor concerns a pair of high school sweethearts that get married on the sky hen find the burdens of real life too tough. Trouble comes when they get mixed up in a hot car racket. From 35mm. J828D

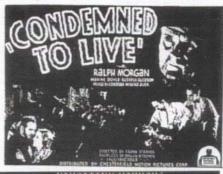


MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-CRIME-FILM NOIR

NOTE: All Mystery-Suspense DVD titles are just \$12.95, plus \$2.05 per tile for packaging, handling, and postage.

LADY IN SCARLET (1935) Reginald Denny, Patricia Farr, Dorothy Revier. An antique dealer is stain with a bloody rapier! There's also a dagger pinning his hand into the hardwood floor. A classy detective and his wisecracking secretary stumble onto the case and become surrounded by danger. A top poverly row mystery. From 16mm M315D FEAR IN THE NIGHT (1947) DeForest Kelley, Paul Kelly, Ann Doran. Outstanding film noir story about a man who dreams that he commits murder and when he awakens discovers he may actually have committed it in real life. Creepy and atmospheric with solid performances by all. Don't pass this one by, you'll like it a lot. From 16mm. M071D THE HITCH-HIKER (1952) Frank Lovejoy, Edmund O'Brien, William Talman A film noir classic about two vocationing businessmen who are held captive by a psychopath. Talman should have been considered for an Oscar normination for his role as the paralytic eyed killer. A 'deser' film. Don't miss this classic. Directed by Ids Lupino. 16mm. M102D

film. Don't miss this classic. Directed by Ida Lupino. 16mm. M102D THREE BL.ONDES IN HIS LIFE (1960) Jock Mahoney, Greta Thyssen, Tony Dexter, Valerie Porter. A tough insurance dick goes to LA to look into the murder of a his pal. It's found that the murdered man knew three different blondes and was having love affairs with each of them. A slick mystery with lots of gorgeous women. 16mm. M323D



FORGOTTEN HORROR

NOTE: All Mystery-Suspense DVD titles are just \$12.95, pl title for packaging, handling, and postage.

HOUSE OF MYSTERY (1934) Verna Hillie, Ed Lowry, Brand

HOUSE OF MYSTERY (1934) Verna Hillie, Ed Lowry, Brandon Hurst. An ancient curse and a killier ape are threatening a group of hightened people confined within the walls of a spooky old haunted mansion. A well-made Monogram horror thriller. From 16mm. FK18D CONDEMNED TO LIVE (1935) Ralph Morgan, Mischa Auer, Maxine Doyle. Robert Frazer. This well-done poverty row production has a vamprise terrorizing a small European village. This is one of those rare films that rises far above its low budget roots. Creepy and atmospheric with Morgan in fine form as the vamprise. 16mm. H0950 CRIME OF DR. CRESPI (1935) Enc Von Stroheim. Dwight Frye, Harriet Russell, Paul Guilfoyle. Hospital horrors! A mad doctor plots to get rid of his enemy by burying him alliev. Von Stroheim plays his usual egodistical prototype very effectively. This was probably Dwight Frye's biggest role, and he's quite good in it. From 16mm. FH28D REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES (1936) Dean Jagger, Dorothy Stone. An evil genius uses thought control and poison gas to turn people into zombie slaves. Beta Lugosi was scheduled to star, but backad out at the last minute. There are some atmospheric soenes in the serie wilds of the Cambodian jumple amistat ancient temples. From 16mm. H0110

oheric scenes in the eerie wilds of the mples. From 16mm. H011D



SINISTER SIX-GUNS

NOTE: All Sini Sinister Six-gun DVD titles are just \$11.95, plus \$2.05 per sing, handling, and postage.

YOUNG BLOOD (1932, Monogram) Bob Steele, Helen Foster, Charle King, Bob plays kind of a Robin-Hood-type bandit, giving some insigning shooty to needy local people. However, he then falls for a French actress from whom his gang stole jewels. He returns them, but is soon at odds with a corrupt shertif played by King, From 15mm, M4950 FRONTIER DAY'S (1934, Spectrum) Bill Cody, Ada Ince, Wheeler Oakman, Billy Jr., Lafe McKee. This is probably Cody's best western. Bill plays a lawdog tracking down a gang responsible for hold-ups and murders. He's tramed for murder himselft Some fabulious Lone Pine footage. Highly recommended. From a beauthul 16mm print. W016D RIO RATTLER (1035, Reliable) Tom Tyler, Eddle Cribbon, Marion Schilling, William Gould. A fiend known as the Rattler' is on the loose. He shoots down Tom's pail in cold blood. When Tom goes after the killer, and can Tom bring him to justice? A solid Tyler effort. 16mm. W500D THE RIDDING AVENGER (1036, Diversion) Host Gibson, Ruth Mix, Stanley Blystone, Buzz Barton, June Gale. Hoot takes the identity of a dead shootst. The Morning Glory Kid.* With this as a front, he joins a crafty gang of rustlers. Hoots western humor shines. 16mm. W501D GIT ALONG LITTLE DOGGIES (1937, Republic) Gene Aufry, Smreley Burnette, Judith Allen, William Farnum. Oil drillers are at odds with cattlemen over range land rights. Gene is called in to clear things up and falls for the local banker's Baughter. From 16mm. W500D COME ON RANGERS (1938, Republic) Roy Rogers. Mary Hart.

John Carradine. A swindler murders Roy's ex-boas. Roy ends up getting the blame! Look for a really rousing shootout at the finale of this slick Republic production. Carradine is great. Recommended. 18mm. W518D



Frankly Scarlet

Scarlet Street managing editor Tom Amorosi and I really wanted to be there last November. We'd been planning another trip to California, anyway, so what better time than to have it coincide with Forrest J Ackerman's 85th birthday celebration? After all, the Original and Only Dr. Ackula is not only a valued Scarlet Scribe, he started the whole ball rolling when he teamed with publisher James Warren to bring us the original incarnation of Famous Monsters of Filmland.

Alas and alack, it was not to be, but soon thereafter Forry's trusted aide de camp (no relation to Rosemary) Joe Moe popped up on the Scarlet Street Message Boards with a full report.

Here's Joe:

"It was a real Bash! Wish you all could have been there. Scarlet Street was awarded one of the very first 4E Awards, a new award voted by Forry's trusty Bat Pack. The certificates were awarded to individuals and organizations who have contributed to Forry's life, happiness, and general well-being over the long haul. SS is in the distinguished company of Ron Borst, Jerry Weist, Joe Blasco, Joe Dante, Ray Brad-

bury, John Landis, Bill Warren, Curtis Harrington, and a few others!

"Every year we try to come up with collectible party favors for Forry to give out. This year, we featured a special magazine called It's Alive @ 85, filled with Forry images and stories. All 250 of these mags were claimed and much appreciated by the guests. I'm sure a few of these limited mags will turn up on eBay eventually. I remember a couple of birthdays ago when the Dr. Ackula party fa-

vors were pawned online!

"The roast was a very gentle one, with Brad Linaweaver starting the lineup, followed by John Landis. Anne Hardin and Bjo Trimble said some very sweet words. Carla Laemmle was in rare form, reciting some lines from her film work. There were a lot of classic ladies in attendance, in fact, including Lydia Van Vogt and Ann (WAR OF THE WORLDS) Robinson. Next, I had the privilege of handing out the 4E Awards. The certificates are lovely, but the limited trophies are really beautiful. They're life-sized bronzed Forry hands, Dracula ring on his finger and the Mummy ring crest as a cufflink, with an inscribed bronze plaque on the back of the wrist. I got one and still can't believe it! The trophy award winners this year were John Landis, Ray Bradbury, Tom and Terri Pinckard, Walt Daugherty, Anne Hardin . . . and me!

"Congratulations, Scarlet Street! And keep the torch burning!"



Well, no sooner had we achieved a small measure of calm after the excitement of being honored with a genuine 4E Award, then 4E himself dropped by the message boards for a few words:

"Hello, gang! Would've liked to pop in and say thanx a long, long time ago, but I've been in a galaxy far, far away! I've had 10 house guests all week from as far away as Israel and Argentina. I appreciate all the greetings and brrthday witches, tho. There were around 240 guests at my Friar's Club party, but we managed to keep an empty chair in honor of all my Scarlet Street pals. I hope you'll all be around to join me for future shocks. I don't plan on returning to Mars anytime soon. I hope to become the George Burns of Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Horror one day. Only 15 more

Continued on page 77

SCARLET LETTERS Continued from page 8

ertheless was honored for it twice. In 1961, he received the British equivalent of the Academy Award for Best Actor (the BAFTA Award) and, later, he was honored with France's Victoire de Cinema. However, it wasn't until Perkins bought out his Paramount Pictures contract in 1961, gladly put Hollywood behind him (Paramount Pictures had not been easy on him when he refused to end his love affair with another star, Tab Hunter) and became involved with the fresh and creative film scene in Europe, that he gave his most-honored performance—as Philip Ven der Besh, Ingrid Bergman's "lost young lover, in Anatole Litvak's GOOD-BYE AGAIN. For this fresh performance, he received four important awards: Italy's David of Donatello trophy, Bel-

In closing, I'd like to say a little something about the article's reference to two of Perkins' lovers—Timmy Everett and Grover Dale—because I don't feel that the term "lovers" does them adequate justice. When Perkins was appearing on Broadway in LOOK HOMEWARD ANGEL and Everett was appearing on Broadway, too, in THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, they became romantically involved. Everett was a highly volatile individual, who eventually attempted to take his own life when Tab Hunter reentered Perkins' life and turned Perkins and

gium's Grand Prix International, Ger-

many's Grosse Otto, and The Best Actor

Award at the 1961 Cannes Film Festival.

Everett's affair into a Broadway gossip scandal, surreptitiously referred to as "The T Triangle" (Tony, Timmy and Tab). Perkins managed to end this really tortured entanglement when he decided to return to Hollywood, passing on SOME LIKE IT HOT to appear opposite Audrey Hepburn in GREEN MANSIONS. (Everett, who appeared in the film version of THE MUSIC MAN, would eventually die from a drug overdose.) Grover Dale, the dancer/choreographer remembered for his work in THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN, HALF A SIXPENCE, and THE YOUNG GIRLS OF ROCHEFORT, was an important part of Perkins' life for six years. They were live-in lovers, but they were both very ambitious in terms of their careers and both were under the care of the well-known New York psychiatrist, Mildred Newman. Both tried to go straight, Dale marrying Anita Morris on July 29, 1973 and Perkins marrying Berry Berenson 11 days later.

I was very impressed with Anthony Dale's very informative review (*Scarlet Street #42*) of perhaps the greatest musical of our time, FUNNY FACE, the film in which, for the first time, Audrey Hepburn became such a ravishing Hubert de Givenchy creation.

I'm also delighted that Mr. Dale singled out as a "memorable performances" her Eliza Dolittle in MY FAIR LADY, certainly, one of the few genuinely exquisite musicals of our time. In the capable hands of George Cukor, she became a formidable actress indeed! Perhaps Mr. Dale will some day review one of her forgotten films, GREEN MAN-SIONS. Even before it reached movie screens, it had become "famous" at MGM, because it was planned as a major production by the Freed Unit and was to have been directed by Vincente Minnelli from a script by Alan Jay Lerner. Pier Angeli's screen test for the role played by Hepburn was actually a 12-day Vincente Minnelli production that costarred her with Edmund Purdom.

Raymond Banacki Brooklyn, NY

Thanx for writing, Ray. We can always count on you for an interesting and informative Scarlet Letter.

"Wanted: More Bullies Like Tommy Bond," eh? *Scarlet Street* is a delight from the very first page!

Todd Kohler Seattle, WA

We were hoping somebody'd notice

100

I am still reading Scarlet Street #42 with tremendous enjoyment. This is just my second issue; I live in an uncivilized broom closet of the world where Scarlet Street doesn't show up on any newsstands, so I had no idea you existed until I stumbled my way across vast, darkened stretches of the internet to find your excellent website. The magazine is very good. I am dazzled by the sheer density of words and ideas. I don't feel pandered to





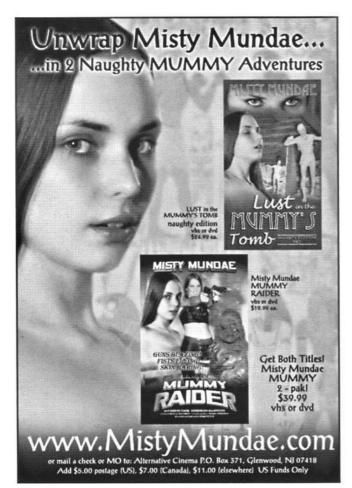
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 12

as is the case with so many other magazines that quaver behind tiny dribbles of paragraphs, whose editors live in fear that my gnat's-ass brain might not be able to withstand the jolt of more than 100 words on any given subject.

By the way, in one of Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide* novels, 42 was the answer to everything. Coincidence?

Andy Demsky Napa, California

We must <u>always</u> be careful never to break Rule 42, Andy. And listen, Scarlet Streeters, if you can't find us on your local magazine rack, please email us at Reditor@aol.com.

This is probably the 50th-or-so letter you've received in response to the review of Sam Fuller's THE NAKED KISS in *Scarlet Street* #43, but I've gotta chime in as well. The one thing that marred Barry Monush's review was his description of the opening of film, where he describes Constance Towers as she "... whacks the living daylights out her drunken pimp with her purse"

Purse? She used a phone! That's how I remember it when I last saw it at the Film Center here in Chicago. That's part of the whole wild, hallucinatory energy of the scene. Had it been "merely" a purse I don't think it would have captured the imagination of so many cineastes, whether they were Fuller fans or not. You can't look at an old telephone the same way after seeing that scene!

Otherwise, I think the review was quite perceptive. One has to admit the film is not for everyone, but one of the things its admirers appreciate is the point of view the film takes, reversing the conventional expectations so that the "norwall" small-town world is the one that appears strange and alien. Of course, for Fuller, I don't think there was any other way he could see it.

Álso, I think Constance Towers was more than adequate in her part, but it's a hard thing to judge in a film that plays havoc with one's expectations as energetically as THE NAKED KISS. I can't honestly say it's one of my favorites, but I can't forget it either.

Richard Chwedyk

rchwedyk@entéract.com

Thanx for writing, Richard. Actually, you were the first-or-so letter we received in response to the review of Sam Fuller's THE NAKED KISS.

Recently got my subscription and my first issue. Cool mag! I am especially pleased with the Sherlock Holmes forum on the website. Keep up the good work!

Bob Byrne

Robert.Byrne@ci.austin.tx.us

Scarlet Streeters, if you haven't visited the Scarlet Website at www.scarletstreet.com and checked our massive message boards, then you're missing out on the full, outrageous Scarlet Experience!

Greetings, people of *Scarlet Street*! I'd like to know why there isn't more Anne

Rice material between Scarlet Street's pages? I'm a huge fan of her's, as are millions of others, and it only seems natural that news and articles about her would be in your mag. Do you agree? Keep up the great work!

Gary Swafford Knoxville, TN

Gary, some Anne Rice material is in the works. Keep watching these pages! Well, not these pages, 'cause she isn't in this issue

I just finished reading Scarlet Street #40 and it was every bit as great as the previous issues. The article about Humphrey Bogart as Doctor X (ANOTHER X MAN: THE RETURN OF DOCTOR X) was one of the best I've read in a long time. Thanks again for the great magazine and may the next issue just get better.

Harold A. Swaun Clinton, CT



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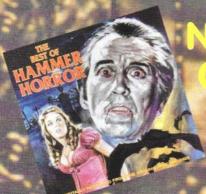
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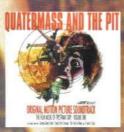
















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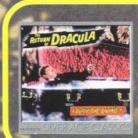








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the NEWS



HOUND

Here's The Hound to spring some surprises on you poor, unsuspecting Scarlet Streeters regarding a few tantalizing entertainment choices for Spring 2002 and onward

Now Slaying

It's about time: the elaborate Dream-Works/Warner Bros. coproduction THE TIME MACHINE finally reaches theaters in March after many delays. Guy Pearce of 2000's MEMENTO and this year's THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO stars as the time traveler in this latest movie version of the H.G. Wells novel, directed by his great-grandson Simon Wells. Jeremy Irons, Philip Bosco, Phyllida Law (Emma Thompson's mum), and Mark Addy (Fred Flintstone in 2000's VIVA ROCK VEGAS) also star Actor Bill Paxton makes his feature directing debut in March with the psychological thriller FRAILTY (Lion's Gate). Paxton costars with Matthew Mc-Conaughey and Powers Boothe in this taut tale of the FBI's search for a serial killer A deadly virus threatens to turn the world's inhabitants into livingdead zombies-so grab your joystick and enjoy RESIDENT EVIL, the Screen Gems feature based on the gory video game of the same name. Milla Jovovich, Michelle Rodriguez, and Eric Mabius star, and Paul Anderson (1998's SOLDIER) directs.

Also in March: Some nasty burglars know how to press Jodie Foster's buttons in THE PANIC ROOM (Columbia), a thriller from writer David Koepp (1999's STIR OF ECHOES and the upcoming SPI-DER-MAN) and director David Fincher (1999's FIGHT CLUB). Forest Whittaker and Jared Leto also star Wesley Snipes returns as Marvel Comics' avenging vampire hunter in BLADE II (New Line Cinema). Costar Kris Kristofferson and screenwriter David S. Gover both return for this sequel, directed by Guillermo Del Toro (1997's MIMIC) In celebration of its 25th anniversary, E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL will have a limited theatrical release in March. Universal will wait until July for a wider release of this special edition, which includes new footage, spiffed-up computerized effects shots, and a new digital sound remix.

Rumbling into theaters in April is pro wrestler The Rock (aka Dwayne Johnson) as THE SCORPION KING (Universal), in a prequel that depicts the origins of the character introduced in last year's THE MUMMY RETURNS. Chuck Russell (1994's THE MASK) directs and Michael Clarke Duncan and Kelly Hu costar The FRIDAY THE 13th franchise has a last gasp in April with JASON X (New Line Cinema), in which our second-favorite masked madman is still slashing away on

desolated 25th century Earth. ANDRO-MEDA's Lexa Doig and director David Cronenberg also appear Robin Williams is cast way against type as a photo-lab technician who stalks the family of a customer in ONE HOUR PHOTO (Fox Searchlight), the first feature film from music-video director Mark Romanek. The thriller also stars Gary Cole, Connie Nielsen, and Eriq La Salle.

Future Features

Stephen Sommers, writer/director of the newfangled MUMMY and its sequel, is reportedly prepping a Ray Harryhausen tribute film of sorts entitled THE ARGO-



Jack the Ripper stalks the streets of Whitechapel once more in FROM HELL (2001), a superior film that failed to find an audience as successfully as Jack found victims.

NAUTS. Set in the late thirties, the tale concerns a group of adventurers who unearth the Argo and follow in the path of Jason and the you-know-who's. They magically end up in mythological Greece, battling Minotaurs, monsters, and all manner of animated annoyances.

Christina Ricci stars in the supernatural thriller THE GATHERING from Granada Pictures, the big-screen division of the U.K. TV production company. Ricci plays a Yank backpacker who experiences strange visions after visiting the ruins of a first-century English church. THE GATHERING costars Ioan Gruffudd (TV's HORNBLOWER) and is directed by Brian

Gilbert (1997's WILDE), with a screenplay by POIROT veteran Anthony Horowitz. Watch for this Fine Line Features release later this year.

Former television beast (as in BEAUTY AND THE . . .) Ron Perlman portrays the lead villain in STAR TREK: NEMESIS, Paramount's 10th Trek feature, which is headed for theaters this Thanksgiving. Perlman plays an evil ruler from a race called the Remans, the nastier cousins to the dreaded Romulans. In addition to the Enterprise's complement of usual suspects, the cast includes Steven Culp from the TV series JAG, Dina Meyer of STAR-SHIP TROOPERS, and cameo appearances by Trek returnees Whoopi Goldberg, Wil Wheaton, Kate Mulgrew, and Majel Barrett. Stuart Baird (1998's U.S. MÁRSHALS) directs.

Dejà Views

Pierce Brosnan has decided that Four is Not Enough. The reigning 007 has announced that the 20th James Bond film, now in production in various exotic locales, will not be his last after all. Brosnan's five stints as Bond, of course, won't be a record-setter-Sean Connery and Roger Moore each had seven go-rounds. Bond #20, meanwhile, has Brosnan starring alongside high-profile Bond girl Halle Berry (as Jinx) and British actor Toby Stephens—son of Maggie Smith and PRIVATE LIFE's Sherlock Holmes, Robert Stephens—as the lead villain. MGM and director Lee Tamahori (2001's ALONG CAME A SPIDER) are spying a November release.

And speaking of spies—I SPY (Columbia) is the latest in the ceaseless series of movies based on old TV shows. Starring in this feature version of the 1965-1968 Bill Cosby/Robert Culp series are Eddie Murphy as Kelly Robinson and Owen Wilson as Alexander Scott. Along for the ride are Malcolm McDowell, Gary Cole, and Famke Janssen. Betty Thomas, who directed Eddie Murphy's 1998 hit DOCTOR DOOLITTLE, helms the buddy caper, which should hit theaters sometime this year.

The Hound found CHARLIE'S ANGELS one of the most pleasing guilty pleasures of 2000. Now, Premiere magazine reports that the director of that confection—a young chap who goes by the name McGù—has been signed by Warner Bros. to helm the next SUPERMAN movie. But just what that movie will be, and who will star in it, is anyone's McGuess—though there's still a chance it'll team Supes with a certain Dark Knight from Gotham City.

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TAB: Say, Roddy, have you seen the swell Discussion Boards over on the Scarlet Website? You can sign on and talk about classic Universal Horrors, Hammer Films, Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Alfred Hitchcock, Tarzan of the Apes, The Thin Man, Jack the Ripper, and just about anything else that comes to mind! Why, heck, you can even talk about sexual subtexts in our old pictures...

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Website designed by John E. Payne

Playing the Numbers Sinatra and the Rat Pack Movies

Between the years 1960 and 1964, Frank Sinatra and his Rat Pack pals (Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, Joey Bishop) appeared in a quartet of numerically-tagged films that, popular legend has it, were mere excuses for the gang to gather and party. Certainly, OCEAN'S ELEVEN (1960), the best known thanks to its recent remake, seems little more than an excuse to vivify Las Vegas-the stars

shot the film



during the day before going onstage at night to clown around—but to dismiss the Rat Pack pictures summarily is to forego some vintage entertainment, much of it courtesy of Ol' Blue Eye's cronies and a few "civilians" along for the ride.

Doubtless hoping to dip their DVD toes in the new OCEAN, Warner Bros. has released on disc the original feature, plus 4 FOR TEXAS (1963) and ROBIN AND

THE 7 HOODS (1964), neglecting only SERGEANTS 3 (1962), a Western reworking of GUNGA DIN (1939) with Sinatra, Martin, and Lawford as the sergeants, and Sammy Davis as Sam Jaffe.

OCEAN'S ELEVEN is an oddly disjointed, meandering picture, but then what can you say about a film in which Dean Martin displays more energy than anyone else? Sinatra plays Danny Ocean, but the Eleven aren't strictly his and the heist plot (in which five Vegas casinos are hit simultaneously) is the inspiration of a "retired" old gangster named Spyros

Acebos (Akim Tamiroff). Furthermore, Sinatra seems curiously disinterested in everything surrounding him—in-cluding Angie Dickinson, wasted as Danny's estranged wife. When one of the gang dies, Danny is supposed to be hit hard. We're told he's hit hard, but you'd never know it to look at Sinatra. This is one picture where his ring-ading-ding never dongs.

Davis, Lawford, and Bishop are serviceable, Red Skelton and George Raft are billed as special guests and given nothing to do, distaff Rat Packer Shirley MacLaine is unbilled and briefly amusing as a drunk, and Cesar Romero is fun as another not-so-ex-gangster, but the real snap-such as it is-comes from Dino, who even trumps the tuneless Sinatra by getting to sing the bouncy "Ain't That a Kick in the Head."

Sinatra and Martin are the only Rat Packers in 4 FOR TEXAS, and Sinatra's in it less than his top billing might lead you to expect. Again, Dino pretty much carries the show, though he gets some help from Victor Buono as an unscrupulous banker and Charles Bronson as a gunslinger. (He gets none at

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NEWS HOUND Continued from page 18 **Novel Ideas**

Producer/director Lawrence Kasdan has begun production on DREAMCATCHER, the William Goldman-scripted adaptation of Stephen King's 2001 novel about four childhood friends with a telepathic connection, who band together as adults to fight an alien invasion. Morgan Freeman, Tom Sizemore, Thomas Jane, and Mark Wahlberg star in this Castle Rock production due in 2003.

The busy producer/director duo of James Wong and Glenn Morgan (THE X-FILES) are adapting John Kessel's 1983 sci-fi short story Hearts Do Not in Eyes Shine. It's the tale of an unhappily married couple who submits to having their memories selectively erased. (Presumably they'll remember the names of their divorce attorneys.) As The Hound reported last time, Morgan and Wong also have a pair of cult remakes on their slate: WIL-LARD ("Eat 'em up!") and DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK.

Updates Aplenty

Cue those Tubular Bells-THE EXOR-CIST prequel from director John Frankenheimer is about to start production. Liam Neeson-not Kerr Smith as earlier rumored-stars as the young Father Lancaster Merrin, the titular exorcist portrayed by Max Von Sydow in EXORCIST I and II. Shooting is scheduled to include locations in the U.K. and Africa.

HALLOWEEN: THE HOMECOMING vanished from the Halloween 2001 release schedule because of reshoots, but this eighth and final (yeah, right) episode in the fright franchise will probably reach theaters this summer. Still, it's possible that Miramax will decide to wait till next year, since 2003 will be the 25th anniversary of the 1978 original.

TV Terrors

After nine seasons and 201 episodes, THE X-FILES—the show that made horror and sci-fi cool again-ends its small-screen run in May with a two-part series finale that will likely bring back David Duchovny for the denouement. Creator and executive producer Chris Carter promises to bring closure to most of the show's remaining mysteries—such as the origin of Scully's (Gillian Anderson) child and the disappearance of Mulder (Duchovny)but will leave some plotlines to be explored in upcoming X-FILES feature films. (Carter is contracted to produce at least one more for 20th Century Fox.) Many think the series had long ago seen its best years, and that Duchovny's departure after season seven had removed the show's raison d'être, but the addition of new Agents Monica Reves (Annabeth Gish) and John Doggett (Robert Patrick) held promise for fresh ideas and intriguing interplay—and perhaps a new partnership to take over the paranormal sleuthing. Such is not to be, but we'll always have reruns-and DVD-to revisit THE X-FILES, the best episodes of which are true genre TV classics.

Matt Frewer returns for his fourth (and perhaps final) made-for-cable stint as Sherlock Holmes in THE CASE OF THE WHITECHAPEL VAMPIRE, due this year on The Hallmark Channel, formerly known as Odyssey. This time, the producers of the telefilm series have decided to avoid the Conan Doyle canon altogether. (The previous production THE ROYAL SCANDAL incorporated elements from the short stories "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Bruce-Partington Plans.") Scripted by series director Rodney Gibbons (replacing veteran adapter Joe Wiesenfeld), this latest yarn finds Holmes in post-Ripper Whitechapel investigating clairvoyants, bats, an abbey of terrorized monks, and a series of vam-pirelike murders. Kenneth Welsh again provides splendid support as stalwart Dr. John Watson.

Joss Whedon, the prodigious creator of BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, next conquers outer space in his new show for the Fox network-FIREFLY. Fox is already committed to a 13-episode run, which is set 500 years in the future and concerns the crew of a deep-space starship. Expect Whedon's new universe to contain lots of his trademark action,

angst, and humor.

THE X-FILES meets MILLENNIUM meets GOING MY WAY? ABC is considering a new paranormal series about a former priest who investigates alleged miracles for a shadowy organization that studies ancient Biblical prophecies. Richard Hatem, writer/producer of Screen Gems' January release THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES, is developing the series based on an unproduced feature script by Michael Petroni, adapter of the current Anne Rice vampire feature QUEEN OF THE DAMNED.

Mel Gibson's Icon Productions is set to produce a big-budget 10-part miniseries about Alexander the Great for HBO. The show is being adapted from Mary Renault's historical novels *The Persian Boy* (long promised for filming) and *Fire from Heaven*, which explore all aspects of the Macedonian king's life—including his homosexuality, which most media depictions have skirted. Alexander has become a great attraction in Hollywood; at least two competing biographical feature projects are in preproduction.

TV Tidbits

NBC is planning two TV-movie remakes as series pilots: Stephen King's CARRIE (OUR MISS BROOKS, it ain't), and a new version of LOST IN SPACE. USA Network's series THE DEAD ZONE, based on Stephen King's 1979 novel, will debut in June, starring Anthony Michael Hall, Nicole de Boer, and Michael Moriarty The WB network has renewed SMÁLLVILLE for a second season, starting this fall FOX canceled THE TICK, their sitcom based on Ben Edlund's comic, after airing only eight episodes Ex-X-FILES producers Glenn Morgan and James Wong are developing the drama series HISTORY OF THE 21st CENTURY for NBC, based on the soonto-be-released book by Gentry Lee, which takes a view of "history" from the perspective of a generation hence.

The Wicked Stage

Frank Wildhorn's DRACULA, THE MUSICAL ended its Southern California run back in November, but the producers are promising a Broadway debut in the fall. Tony nominee Tom Hewitt, former star of THE LION KING and THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW, will likely fly east to stake his claim to the title role for the Big Apple premiere. Two-time Tony winner Des McAnuff will repeat his directorial duties for Broadway—all the better to keep his high-flying (literally) cast in check. A cast album on the Atlantic label is in the works.

The Home Video Vault

Steven Spielberg's awesome A.I.: AR-TIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE arrives on video (rental only) and DVD (\$29.99) in March from DreamWorks. Also in March, Anchor Bay releases THE EVIL DEAD on DVD in a special edition (\$19.98) and a deluxe edition (\$49.98)in leather case that looks like the scary-faced book from the Sam Raimi movies. Additional March releases include the Jet Li sci-fi actioner THE ONE (Columbia/Tri-Star, VHS rental, DVD \$27.98), and the hilarious 1940 Bob Hope horror hit THE GHOST BREAKERS, de-

TO SINGAPORE and ROAD TO ZANZI-BAR, and the welcome reissues of ROAD TO MOROCCO and ROAD TO UTO-PLA (Universal \$19.98 each)

PIA (Universal, \$19.98 each).

William Castle's creepy classics HOMI-CIDAL, MR. SARDONICUS, and STRAIT-JACKET all arrive in March in DVD editions from Columbia/Tri-Star (\$24.98 each) that include behind-the-scenes featurettes and other extras. And Elite offers a THX-certified "Millennium Edition" of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD on DVD (\$24.98) that features commentary tracks by George Romero and the entire cast, interviews, featurettes, and extras galore.

The darkly atmospheric Jack the Ripper thriller FROM HELL slashes into video stores in April, as does the William Castle remake THIRTEEN GHOSTS (Warner, DVD \$24.98), and the 1969 bizarro classic DE SADE (MGM/UA, DVD \$19.98)

A&E Home Video offers two DVD box sets of the jazzy TV noir classic PETER GUNN on DVD for \$39.95 each. And Paramount offers the entire first season of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION in a seven-disc DVD gift set for \$139.98.

Peter Cushing's 1968 BBC production of THE HOUND OF THE BASKER-VILLES is at last available on video—but only to European fans and others who can play PAL videos and Region 2 DVDs. Also available from the same source is the 1976 telefilm THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY starring Peter Firth, Jeremy Brett, and John Gielgud (see *Scarlet Street* #42 for details), and the memorable 1977 COUNT DRACULA, starring Louis Jourdan, Frank Finlay, and Judi Bowker. Each title costs \$19.99 on either VHS or DVD, or \$50.00 for all three features.

In May, watch for the home video release of THE OTHERS; VANILLA SKY; and JIMMY NEUTRON, BOY GENIUS and quite possibly HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE. June may see



buting on DVD Bob Hope and Bing Crosby are back on the road (along with from Universal for Dorothy Lamour, natch) in four DVD releases from Universal 9.99. Hope (Bob) sal: ROAD TO SINGAPORE (1940), ROAD TO ZANZIBAR springs eternal in (1941), ROAD TO MOROCCO (1942, pictured), and ROAD March—and so, TO UTOPIA (1946). Public-domain titles ROAD TO RIO of course, does (1947) and ROAD TO BALI (1953) are in release from various Crosby (Bing)—with the DVD debuts of ROAD to make the series.

the release of a special DVD edition of STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN. And keep an eye out in the second half of the year for THE LORD OF THE RINGS, MONSTERS INC., and the BACK TO THE FUTURE trilogy.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: musician George Harrison; TV horror host Raymond "Selwyn" Sparenberg; comic artists Johnny Craig and Gray Morrow; cartoonists Herblock (Herbert L. Block) and George Gately; violinist Isaac Stern; singers Peggy Lee, Etta Jones, O.C. Smith, Rufus Thomas, and Melanie Thornton; songwriter Jay Livingston; TV hostess Dagmar (Virginia Egnor); comedian Monteria Ivey; columnist and TV writer Nord Riley; costume designer Danilo Donati; forties radio performer Raymond Edward Johnson; stuntman Bobby Bass; TV broadcasters Siani Lee, Chip Moody, Howard K. Smith, and Dick Schaap; animator Faith Hubley; computer animation pioneer Robert Abel; novelists Ken Kesey and John Knowles; playwright Anthony Shaffer; screenwriter William Read Woodfield; producers Roy Boulting, Julia Phillips, Paul B. Radin, Thomas Tannenbaum, and Frederic W. Ziv; directors Budd Boetticher, Frederick De Cordova, Ted Demme, Gerald Mayer, and Herbert Ross; and actors Charlotte Coleman, Merrill Connally, Gloria Foster, Rachel Gurney, Albert Hague, Sir Nigel Hawthorne, Eileen Heckart, Hildegarde Knef, Harold Russell, Tommy Hollis, Ernest Pintoff, Karen Lamm, Gardner Mc-Kay, John Mitchum, Pauline Moore, Peggy Mount, Lani O'Grady, Jean Richard, Byron Sanders, Janet Shaw, and Diana Van der Vlis.

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via email to TheNewsHound@yahoo.com.



Scarlet Street's DVD Reviews

CIRCUS OF HORRORS **Anchor Bay Entertainment** \$24.98

If you listened to AM radio in the summer of 1960, you couldn't help hearing a catchy pop tune called "Look for a Star. Garry Mills' jaunty ditty was quickly covered by Deane Hawley, Garry "Don't call me Mills!" Miles, and Billy Vaughn. All four renditions landed in the Top 40 simultaneously, quite a feat for a song introduced in a low-budget British slice of cinematic cheesecake and sawdust.

CIRCUS OF HORRORS (1960) bleeds from the adroit pen of George Baxt, who tapped a similar vein for CITY OF THE DEAD (aka HORROR HOTEL, 1960) and NIGHT OF THE EAGLE (aka BURN, WITCH, BURN!, 1962). Whereas the other two adaptations are comparatively subtle black-and-white spookers, CIRCUS positively drenches the screen with oversaturated Eastmancolor hues.

Bernard Schuler (Anton Diffring), a pseudonymous renegade plastic surgeon, transforms a broken-down French circus into a notorious European attraction. The carnival provides the perfect facade for Schuler to surreptitiously repair the faces of disfigured women with dubious pasts. The surgeon maintains a Svengalilike influence over his patients, making them stars of the midway while demanding their sexual favors. Trouble arises whenever one of the women decides to leave the troupe; Schuler arranges fatal "accidents" during public performances, which guarantee that his secrets will be kept. The police finally deduce the sinister pattern and hatch a plan to permanently retire his scalpel.

CIŔCUS OF HORRORS fleshes out its credible backstage drama with a bevy of scantily dressed continental beauties, many of whom are ticketed for spectacular deaths. Baxt further spices the ambi-

ance with a couple of cheesy tableaux (Adam and Eve; Sappho and her busty handmaidens) displayed in the Temple of Beauty

Anton Diffring's icy, narcissistic screen persona reached full flower in this film. He had previously portrayed cold, in-considerate men in Hammer's unsold TV pilot TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN (1958), as well as in the studio's Dorian Gray variation THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH (1959). CIRCUS, which urged us to look for a star, became popular enough to cement his visage with moviegoers. Resultingly, the Teutonic actor (a "lifelong bachelor") enjoyed a lengthy career playing haughty villains

and Arvan authority figures.

Anchor Bay's DVD boasts an exemplary, blemish-free transfer. The colors are beautifully realized, never betraying their vintage. The picture is letterboxed at 1:77-1 and is far superior to existing television and VHS prints. The supplements are bountiful, including a color theatrical trailer and three black-and-white TV spots, a generous stills assortment, a gallery of original promotional artifacts (including foreign and domestic poster art, the front and back covers of the tie-in paperback book, the Imperial soundtrack album jacket, and a one-sheet comic-strip advertisement), and a thorough Anton Diffring biography in which writer Perry Martin quotes from Richard Valley's interview with director Sydney Hayers from Scarlet Street #6.

-John F. Black

QUEEN BEE Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment \$24.95

Was Joan Crawford ever meaner than when she destroyed dear, sweet Fay Wray's wedding plans and drove poor Fay to lose her mind in Columbia Pictures' 1955 melodrama QUEEN BEE? Yes, she was-when she destroyed dear, sweet Betsy Palmer's wedding plans and drove poor Betsy to hang herself in Columbia Pictures' 1955 melodrama QUEEN BEE.

Is QUEEN BEE essential viewing for every devoted fan of Joan Crawford? You bet your broad shoulders it is, and thanks to Columbia-and well before Warner Bros. has seen fit to release such Crawford classics as MILDRED PIERCE (1945) and FLAMINGO ROAD (1949) in the formatwe now have OUEEN BEE available on DVD in a sparkling transfer, all the better to catch the evil glint in Joan's eyes as she trods over anyone unlucky enough to get in her way.

Crawford plays Eva Phillips, a domineering woman who has driven her rich Southern husband, Avery (Barry Sullivan), to the bottle-and pretty near everyone else to distraction. Eva's lover, Judson Prentiss (John Ireland), dumps her for Avery's sister, Carol Lee (Palmer), but Eva isn't the sort to gracefully step aside. She plots revenge, while Cousin Jennifer (Lucy Marlowe), who began by loving Eva and has come, like the rest of the civilized world, to loathe her, stands





helplessly by, unable to save Carol Lee from the noose and falling hard for the hard-drinking Avery.

Yes. it's the stuff of melodrama, but it's rich, juicy, delicious melodrama, and Crawford proves herself a deft and underrated actress by making Eva, if far from sympathetic, understandable in her desperate loneliness and outsider status. The star finds firm support from the rest of the cast, especially Betsy Palmer, whose talent was wasted on such sixties game shows as I'VE GOT A SECRET and in such unworthy roles as Jason's Mom in FRIDAY THE 13TH (1980).

QUEEN BEE is all decked out in her best finery on DVD, looking drop-dead gorgeous in her transfer and glittering with such accessories as photo galleries, trailers, and vintage advertising. They don't make 'em like this anymore—and if they did, they wouldn't have a star like Joan Crawford to make 'em shine. Listen to the buzz, honey—you won't get stung if you try QUEEN BEE!

—Drew Sullivan

DIE, MONSTER, DIE! THE DUNWICH HORROR MGM Home Entertainment \$14.95 each

The works of H. P. Lovecraft have proven notoriously difficult to adapt for the movies. Lovecraft wrote many standard horror tales, but his most effective stories are modern "Gothic science fiction tales," which work on a level of cosmic dread. These tales emphasize humanity's ultimate insignificance in an elaborate pantheon the author constructed of interstellar beings who, if not malevolent to mankind, are so indifferent that the results are much the same. Often mistaken by their followers for gods-whose chants to release them from exile are actually scientific formulae, not magicktheir appearance is so unearthly that they're indescribable. Small wonder that the Lovecraft projects which have been most successful as films have all but jettisoned the actual stories from which they were adapted.

After Roger Corman rejuvenated his increasingly formulaic Poe series by using Lovecraft's The Case of Charles Dexter Ward (1927)—a fairly straightforward horror mystery-for THE HAUNTED PAL-ACE (1963), AIP attempted another series based more forthrightly on Lovecraft's work. That the series lasted for only two films with—despite Daniel Haller directing both-wildly divergent approaches shows that a formula was desperately sought but never found. Both efforts are hit-and-miss, but not without intriguing moments. One suspects that a more experienced director might have made something more successful of them, particularly DIE, MONSTER, DIE, which reached theaters first in 1965.

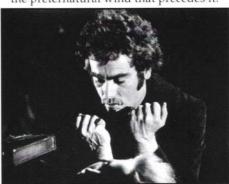
MONSTER's assets are primarily its cast, particularly the performances of Boris Karloff and Freda Jackson as Nahum and Letitia Witley, and in its opulent sets and fluid camerawork. The chief deficit is a script that so determinedly copies the Poe formula that it could have been titled "The Fall of the House of Fungus." Everything—the townspeople refusing to give directions to the remote mansion, the trip there through desolate countryside, the family history by way of a portrait gallery, something nasty in the cellar—is firmly in place.

First-time director Haller's incertitude is manifest in the scene in which Stephen Reinhart (Nick Adams) explores the cellars. Tension is undercut rather than built by having the actor assaulted by a skeleton swinging out of a cupboard, and a gaggle of bats. Such William Castle shock effects are a far cry from the eeriness of the source story, "The Colour Out of Space" (1927), wherein trees sway menacingly without benefit of a breeze. Still, the early scenes of Jackson, vaguely glimpsed behind translucent bed curtains, come nearer the mark, and the alltoo-brief scene of enormous, mutated animals in the greenhouse must rank as among the most successful visualizations of HPL's monstrosities.

Possibly in acknowledgment that all had not gone quite right, it would be five years before another attempt was made, with THE DUNWICH HORROR (1970). Although it opens up and alters its source, it retains more of the particulars and even manages, in some of the dialogue given Dean Stockwell (who plays Wilbur Whately and owns this movie), to present a crash course in Lovecraft's Mythos. Like its predecessor, it is set contemporarily (but then so were HPL's stories), although the Miskatonic University campus is remarkably free of hippie types for the early seventies. The counter culture seems entirely represented by Wilbur, whose assault on the Norman Rockwellesque Dunwich and specifically on virginal Nancy Wagner (virginal Sandra Dee) might be read as allegorical of the youth revolution. This is further reinforced by the use of psychedelic film techniques to characterize the Great Old Ones and those in their thrall, the bodypainted celebrants who populate Nancy's

gaudy hallucinations, and by Nancy's saviors being the patriarchal Ed Begley and Lloyd Bochner. Equating the youth movement to ancient evil is a decidedly curious message from a studio then doing its damnedest to court that market, and characterizing the town's inhabitants as narrow minded rednecks muddles things further.

Subtexts aside, the use of solarized film and strobing colors works effectively to characterize a creature trapped between dimensions, and also disguises budget deficiencies by providing only glimpses of something with lashing, snakelike appendages. More evocative, however, is a shot from the creature's POV of the landscape being whipped by the preternatural wind that precedes it.



As usual, MGM's Midnite Movies are no frills affairs, but the widescreen prints are beautiful and the appropriately low-budget price is very attractive.

-Harry H. Long

LADY OF BURLESQUE Image Entertainment \$24.95

One glance at the post-code year of LADY OF BURLESQUE's release (1943), and you can instantly lower your expectations as far as getting a real eyeful of "burly-que" skin and sizzle. Thankfully, snarky double entendres and flashes of lovely bare legs nonetheless abound for the viewer's licentious pleasure. The main attraction, though, is Barbara Stanwyck, in top freewheeling form as Dixie Daisy, headline dancer at the old operacum-burlesque house, where shady stage shenanigans are the order of endless night.

The focus of the plot's ample red herring centers around various enemies of the high-strung bitch in the bunch, Lolita La Verne (Victoria Faust), who winds up strangled by her own G-string. Suspects include her abusive mobster boyfriend (Gerald Mohr), an effete would-be stage actor (Frank Fenton), and Lew Kelly (Doc Brooks in 1942's BOWERY AT MID-NIGHT) as a bitter old codger. With the show in jeopardy and the murders continuing, it's up to Dixie and her would-be lover—a baggy-pants comic named Bran-nigan (Michael O'Shea)—to get to the bottom of things. They're both prime suspects according to sleepy-eved Inspector Harrigan (Charles Dingle), whose investigation consists of crowding the la-

dies into a room and watching them turn on each other in fabulous displays of sheer bitchery.

When the spotlight is on Stanwyck, the picture is a sheer delight. She rips through the tough-gal dialogue, shimmers like a goddess thanks to some gorgeous cinematography, shimmies a show-



stopping jig with comic Pinky Lee, and sings (in her own voice) the bawdy "Take It Off the E-String, Play It On the G-String" (lyrics by Sammy Čahn). Unfortunately, she draws O'Shea-pathologically smug and unbearable—as a leading man; he and braying baggy pants confederates overplay to almost Lewisian heights. Regardless, the picture's a gem; Stanwyck seems to be having a blast; the set design and Edith Head costumes are to convulse over. Credit is due director William Wellman, who adapts Gypsy Rose Lee's famous 1941 mystery The G-String Murders (ghostwritten by Craig Rice) with a loving attention to detail, creating a heightened sense of time and space-as well as place—that pulls the viewer into the action.

As usual for the Wade Williams/Image DVD series, the transfer is stunning, but from a somewhat battered print. Here,

the print is even worse than usual; in addition to a steady stream of emulsion nicks and scratches, there are splices, audio drops, rips, jumps, jerks, and pieces of scenes missing. It's never enough to stop the show, but enough to notice. Just looking at the trailer, though (the disc's sole extra), will indicate just how good this film looks in comparison to past video versions. Tarnished beauty is what this film is about anyway, so break down, Mister, and spend a few bucks on these lovely ladies.

-Erich Kuersten

BLACK NARCISSUS The Criterion Collection \$39.95

If you've never seen the mystical 1947 drama BLACK NARCISSUS, you might be surprised to find out that the title refers not to a flower, but to Sabu's after-shave lotion, bought at a London army-navy store. The whole film runs on this same level of unpredictability, as was often the case with the motion pictures directed, produced, and written by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, two very individual, talented filmmakers who called themselves the Archers and marched to their own drummers where storytelling was concerned.

The main characters in this film are nuns, but those turned off by the thought of a pious Sunday school sermon needn't fear; these Servants of Mary (as they call themselves) are all too human, a fact that makes this drama rather unique for its time. In the forties, members of any religious order were customarily treated with respect and piety; they were the sort of formidable characters those less fortunate could turn to for wisdom and salvation. In fact, the American distributors of BLACK NARCISSUS were so discomforted by flashback sequences indicating that Sister Clodagh (Deborah Kerr) had a life (not to mention a lover) prior to entering the nunnery, that they were excised from the release prints altogether.

Powell and Pressburger's movie is set in India. It's fitting that it was released the same year India finally won its independence from the British Empire, since the English were never portrayed as being so intrusively out of place in that culture as they are here. An Indian general (Esmond Knight) generously offers the Convent of the Order of the Servants of Mary the use of his abandoned palace, Mopu, a building perched precariously on a mountain 8,000 feet in the air (or 9,000 feet, depending on which character you believe), somewhere in the Himalayas. This windswept roost is tended by a whacked-out old crone named Angu Ayah (May Hallatt) and had previously, in fact, served as a sort of harem for the general's father's collection of women. The general's agent, Mr. Dean (David Farrar), warns the sisters not to get too cozy because there is "something in the atmosphere that makes everything seem exaggerated," something strong enough to have sent an order of monks packing at



an earlier date. Sister Clodagh, the nun in charge, will hear none of it and resolutely stands her ground, not realizing that she is powerless to influence the very human element around and within her.

As a result, the order begins to lose "the order" it was never able to maintain in the first place. Against her will, Sister Philippa (Flora Robson) plants flowers instead of vegetables in the garden; several of the sisters develop unexplainable spots; an Indian girl (Jean Simmons), sent to the sisters to repent her naughty ways, runs off with the Young General (Sabu); a sick child dies despite the better effort of the sisters; and an underlying sexual repression erupts in the socially disagreeable Sister Ruth (Kathleen Byron).

The film functions more on mood and atmosphere than action and plot, much of it due to the evocative art direction of Alfred Junge and the stunning, near-legendary color cinematography of Jack Cardiff. Both men won well-deserved Academy Awards for their work, and the DVD transfer maintains the rich, cartoon-bright color schemes that do indeed give the monastery an otherworldly feel.

The Criterion edition also includes a 1988 voice-track conversation between Michael Powell and fellow director and lifelong fan Martin Scorsese. Insights into how the entire production was put together on a studio backlot and Powell's crediting Walt Disney as an influence are among the fascinating revelations. Also included is a segment from Craig McCall's documentary PERSISTENCE OF LIGHT, concentrating specifically on BLACK NARCISSUS, and a photo gallery that features deleted scenes.

-Barry Monush

MURDER BY DEATH Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment \$24.95

Was it Mrs. Peacock with the candlestick in the conservatory? Or, was it Professor Plum with a revolver in the library? Hey,

wait a minute—wrong movie! MURDER BY DEATH (1976) is a delightfully hilarious whodunit based on the great murder mystery movies of Hollywood's heyday. The world's greatest detectives—all based on such beloved genre characters as Sam Spade, Miss Marple, Nick and Nora Charles, Charlie Chan—are invited to the palatial mansion of Lionel Twain (Truman Capote). Little do our sleuths know what's in store for them at dinner, and who will live to see the Venetian cart.

First to arrive on the scene is the famous Oriental detective Sidney Wang and his Number Three Son, Willie Wang (Peter Sellers and Richard Narita). They narrowly escape death when a large, concrete gargoyle falls off the roof and nearly crushes them. Soon, the rest of the ensemble arrives, including Dick and Dora Charleston (David Niven and Maggie Smith), Sam Diamond and Tess Skeffing-



ton (Peter Falk and Eileen Brennan), Milo Perrier (James Coco), and Miss Jessica Marbles and Miss Withers, her nurse (Elsa Lanchester and Estelle Winwood). Aided by his blind butler, Bensonmum (Alec Guiness), and deaf and dumb cook Yetta (Nancy Walker), Twain joins his guests at the dining table and challenges them to solve a murder—his own.

MURDER BY DEATH was written by Neil Simon and cleverly directed by Robert Moore. The DVD picture is bright and crisp and the audio track is unblemished. Both widescreen and full screen presentations are included, and among the extras are an exclusive conversation with Neil Simon, theatrical trailers, and production notes. MURDER BY DEATH is a must for any mystery fan who enjoys the more zany side of sleuthing.

—Dan Clayton

DEATH ON THE NILE Anchor Bay Entertainment \$24.98

While Cleo's barge may have floated one of the most chaste orgies ever filmed (in 1963's CLEOPATRA), the vehicle of choice for the passengers of Dame Agatha Christie's DEATH ON THE NILE (1978) can't even contemplate sex, what with all the murders going on around them. Except for super sleuth Hercule Poirot (Peter Ustinov) and his friend, Colonel Race (David Niven), everyone on board who isn't a victim is a suspect, or at the very least has a motive for murder. Director John Guillermin has a fine ensemble

of top-notch, all-star talent at his beck and call (including Bette Davis, Angela Lansbury, Maggie Smith, Mia Farrow, George Kennedy, Olivia Hussey, Jane Birkin, Jack Warden, and Simon Mac-Corkindale), and delivers one of the best film adaptations of a Christie mystery. (The weakest characterization comes from Warden, but otherwise the cast works well together.) Working from a literate screenplay by playwright Anthony Shaffer, who also penned the incendiary THE WICKER MAN (1973), Guillermin guides his ship of suspects through the exotic waters of the Nile to an utterly believable surprise ending.

The plot is typical, irresistible Christie fare. When heiress Linnet Ridgeway (Lois Chiles) is found murdered in her cabin, who is responsible? Could it be Jacqueline De Bellefort (Farrow), whose lover was stolen by Linnet? Could it be Mrs. Van Schuyler (Davis), who coveted Linnet's jewelry? Could it be Miss Bowers, whose family was ruined by the Ridgeways? Or could it be authoress Salome Otterbourne (Lansbury, chewing the Egyptian scenery), resorting to murder to avoid a libel suit? Leave it to Belgian detective Poirot to find the killer!

Shining through the sun-drenched locations are the remarkable costumes of Oscar-winning Anthony Powell, which flaunt their textures as much as they flaunt convention to delineate character.

Anchor Bay Entertainment has done full justice to this crowd pleaser. The print is lovely, remarkably clean and concise in its clarity, and is presented in the original aspect ratio of 1.85:1. The disc includes the original theatrical trailer, promotional interviews (for foreign distribu-



tion) with Jane Birkin and Peter Ustinov, some above average talent Bios, and the very fluffy promotional short, THE MAK-ING OF DEATH ON THE NILE.

—Anthony Dale

TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN All Day Entertainment \$24.99

Forty years later, it's difficult to recall how radically Hammer redefined the horror film and how eagerly the public embraced their new approach. American companies fell over themselves to set up deals; one of the more curious was a Screen Gems collaboration on a TV series entitled TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN.

The subject may have seemed logical because Hammer's most drastic overhaul to date had been performed on THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957), iron-



ically to sidestep copyright problems. Screen Gems held the TV rights to the old Universal horrors which it was packaging as SHOCK THEATER. That success, combined with Hammer's and the popularity of anthology shows on the small screen, suggested that a horror anthology would also be a hit. (In fact, such shows as ONE STEP BEYOND, THE TWILIGHT ZONE, THRILLER, ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRE-SENTS, and WAY OUT would soon be primetime staples.) The game plan was for Hammer to film episodes featuring the Baron at Bray, alternating with stateside-produced horror tales unrelated to the character. Curiously, once Screen Gems acquired the right to slap the Hammer name on the product, they refused any input from them.

"The Face in the Tombstone Mirror," as the pilot was dubbed, attempted to marry the disparate approaches of Hammer and Universal. The ruthlessness of Anton Differing's Baron is in keeping with Hammer's model, while Don Megowan's Creature distinctly resembles Universal's. The script, from a story idea supplied by director and associate producer Curt Siodmak, blends Hammer's ever-experimenting Baron with the brain-swapping of Universal's later entries. Even the sets designed by Carl Anderson manage an amalgam-especially the Baron's laboratory, which is a marvel of chock-a-block clutter and irregular contours whose equipment includes some Strickfaddenlike electrical machines. Clay Campbell's makeup and Gert Andersen's photography are also among the assets.

Sadly, the show never quite comes together, partly due to Siodmak's tepid direction and a strictly-from-hunger title sequence, which casts a pall over what follows by resurrecting clips from Universal Horrors—including the Inner Sanctum floating head, whose lip movements never match the narration he seems to be supplying. (By contrast, the end credits, "scored" only by the sound of a rainstorm, are inspired.)

At 30 minutes, TALES OF FRANKEN-STEIN scarcely fills out the DVD, so the disc includes some kinescope excerpts of the 1951 TALES OF TOMORROW adaptation of Mary Shelley's story (starring John Newland and Lon Chaney Jr., whose inebriated asides are, alas, inaudible), numerous trailers (most of which, frankly, look like hell), bloopers from ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANK-ENSTEIN (1948), and a lot of audio stuff, all looking suspiciously like padding to justify the \$20 price tag. The trailers, after the Universal films are dispensed with, don't even follow chronological order, which might have provided some historical context, especially if the commentary-which is terrific, by the way-had extended beyond the pilot. These underwhelming peripherals undercut how great it is having TALES OF FRANKEN-STEIN uncut and looking gorgeous, even if it is somewhat less than Hammer's most shining hour.

-Harry H. Long

BUTTERFIELD 8 Warner Home Video \$19.99

Lovers of camp know it's all in the presentation, and for a balls-to-the-wall Elizabeth Taylor vehicle such as BUT-TERFIELD 8 (1960), the presentation is very important. Luckily this DVD has all the assets needed: full, deep blacks; bold colors; brilliant widescreen (plus a full-screen version); a stunning transfer! Liz looks so round, so firm, so fully packed, she's practically in 3-D! There's only a trailer and some notes on the star by way of extras, but when the price is this right, you'd be a fool not to take this baby home for a real good time.

Even those who have never seen BUT-TERFIELD 8 are probably familiar with the famous opening, wherein the hungover Gloria (Taylor) awakes in a strange bed, while the guy she just slept with slips out the door. Gloria begins searching for a cigarette, helps herself to some whiskey, finds money in her purse, and writes "No Sale" in lipstick on the guy's mirror—after which she walks off with a mink coat belonging to the guy's wife, and a decanter of his whiskey! It's a great opening, and for some critics, the best part of a soapy, overwrought film.

Gloria picks up her car in front of the apartment of her songwriting pal, Steve (Eddie Fisher), then visits her mother (Mildred Dunnock), where she engages in some pricelessly bitchy repartee with mom's acid-tongued friend, Mrs. Thurber

(Betty Field). Meanwhile, her lover of the previous evening, a booze-soaked idler named Weston Liggett (Laurence Harvey), returns to his minkless wife, Emily (Dina Merrill). Before long, however, Weston and Gloria meet again in a bar and are off on another mad spree of sex and wild living. Gloria, it seems, isn't



exactly a prostitute (as many half-asleep critics have mistakenly claimed); she's more of a boozy, Holly Golightly-style hedonist, or as she later declares in that superb Taylor bray, "the slut of all time!" Unfortunately, a lost week with Weston turns her around to love, and she tries to renounce her past. Her guilt-drenched histrionics reach a level of toxic self-righteousness, and the film becomes one of those studies in sin that tries to make you feel guilty at the end for enjoying the beginning.

Though immersed in the story, I couldn't help but compare Liz to Mae West, another zaftig seductress, but one with no delusion of morals. As the bartender says in BUTTERFIELD 8 (describing Gloria): "She's like catnip to every cat in town." (That could easily be the tag line for West's 1933 classic SHE DONE HIM WRONG.) But Liz fumbles the ball by suddenly deciding that her libertine ways, which we've relished all through the film, are vile. She's the antiWest: dark haired and ashamed. Not to worry-by then, discriminating viewers won't care, for this is a DVD to be cherished for its absolutely flawless (some print wear aside) presentation, for its voluptuous, rich colors and tones, and for displaying a practically three-dimensional Liz, in full va-va-voom mode, acting the roof off.

—Erich Kuersten

FRENZY Universal Home Video \$29.98

Universal has once again done great justice to the works of Alfred Hitchcock with its finely-honed presentation of FRENZY (1972). From a swooping opening helicopter shot, carrying the viewer to Lon-

don's fabled Tower Bridge, the film grabs the audience by the collar and never lets go until its final ironic shot.

The opening demonstrates just how remarkable Universal's anamorphic widescreen transfer really is: from the turgid tones of the Thames to the brilliance of the clear blue sky to the dusty hues of the buildings on the shore, all is clearly seen and well-defined. Rarely does an imperfection mar the remainder of the film—though in one famous scene, in the back of a potato lorry does the film seem too dark. Fleshtones are nicely rendered, as are the muted tones of the interior scenes. Virtually free from artifacts, FRENZY bears little signs of aging.

For a Dolby Digital 2.0 mono track, the film delivers a pleasant listening experience. Every delicious word of Anthony Shaffer's dialogue is crystal clear. Ron Goodwin's score is at times martial, at times humorous, and at all times British. (Goodwin's work here is reminiscent of Sir Edward Elgar, best known stateside for his "Pomp and Circumstance.")

Returning to his native England for his 52nd film, Hitchcock presents not only a valentine to the city of his youth, but a mesmerizingly morbid tale of another "wronged man," a vital Hitchcock theme. The Master's touch took the permissiveness of seventies cinema to new heights of suspense, with the addition of graphic violence and nudity only hinted at in previous Hitchcock works. FRENZY is a film to be appreciated by a mature audience with a taste for intense suspense.

The documentary THE STORY OF FRENZY, containing interviews with the



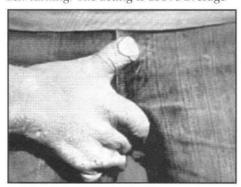
major actors involved in the production (Jon Finch, Anna Massey, Barry Foster), is a very good addition to the disc's Special Features. Screenwriter Anthony Shaffer dispenses useful information, though what Peter Bogdonavich is doing here is anybody's guess! The poster and production photos are arranged nicely (they tend to focus on the more morbid aspects of the film), and the trailer, featuring the Master himself, is extremely humorous, though in rough condition.

—Anthony Dale

BASKET CASE Something Weird Video \$19.99

Duane Bradley (Kevin Van Hentenryck) arrives in New York and checks himself into the sleazy Hotel Broslin on 42nd Street. His sole possessions are a large wicker basket and a large roll of cash. Duane is in town to deal with a secret from his past that pertains to the contents of the basket and a series of brutal murders of doctors. He quickly befriends a hooker (Beverly Bonner) and starts dating the receptionist (Terri Susan Smith) of one of the doomed doctors. All about Duane (and his basket) is soon revealed when the boy's new relationships prove threatening to what's in the wicker.

BASKET CASE (1982) is Frank Henenlotter's first feature-length film and it's a mostly successful fusion of humor and horror. Deficiencies are predominantly the fault of the extreme low budget. (The DVD probably cost more to produce than the film itself!) The film is briskly paced and pulls no punches with the gore; however, but for one brief rape sequence, the violence is too outrageous to be stomach-turning. The acting is above average



for such an inexpensive effort. (Much of the supporting cast came from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and fit the bill well.) Van Hentenryck, Bonner, and Smith all display a charm and innocence not usually associated with this type of film. With the exception of some rough stop-motion animation the effects are quality work, even rivalling some Hollywood pictures from the same period.

BASKET CASE was shot in 16mm and this is the source used for the DVD, presented full frame. The print is free from any damage other than occasional mild speckling. The sound is also fuller and less tinny than on previous releases.

The essay in the enclosed flyer is a good intro to the film's history. Some of this material is also covered in the commentary track, which features four participants: Henenlotter, Bonner, producer Edgar Ievins, and Scooter McCrae, who worked on BASKET CASE 2 (1990). It's a densely-packed track filled with everything from trivia to background info, and is always entertaining and amusing.

Other extras include an enjoyable tour of locations used in the film; TV, movie, and radio spots; outtakes and behind-thescenes footage; radio interviews with Terri Smith; clips from Beverly Bonner's cable comedy show; and an Easter egg of the trailer from BRAIN DAMAGE (1988). Something Weird has certainly packed a lot in this basket!

-Ron Morgan

THEATRE OF DEATH Anchor Bay Entertainment \$24.98

Modern-day Paris is beset by a string of gruesome, vampirelike killings. At the same time, the grand guignol THEATRE OF DEATH (1966), under the direction of the abusive Philippe Darvas (Christopher Lee), is putting on a series of plays with vampiric undertones. Darvas soon falls under the suspicion of the police, and disappears. Could he be on the lam, or is he the vampire's latest victim?

THEATRE OF DEATH is an unjustly neglected British horror film that has, in many respects, withstood the test of time better than many of the more popular Hammer films. Samuel Gallu directs his only horror film with an emphasis on mood and visual style, at times recalling the painterly work of Italian maestro Mario Bava. (Fans of Bava will note the presence of a portrait of Christopher Lee, made up as Kurt Menliff in the Italian director's 1963 film THE WHIP AND THE BODY!) The emphasis on stylish stalkand-slash sequences and a generally sordid and paranoid atmosphere recalls the Italian subgenre known as the giallo, epitomized by Bava's BLOOD AND BLACK LACE (1964). This is most likely coincidental, but adds a certain flavor to the film that tends to be lacking in the Hammer productions of the period. Full marks go to cinematographer Gilbert Taylor, whose presence is doubly surprising considering the film's low-budget origins. Taylor, known for lighting such films as DR. STRANGELOVE (1964) and STAR WARS (1977), goes crazy with colored gels and makes the most of the Techniscope format. The end result is a film that looks like a million bucks.

As far as the story goes, it's fairly routine, though consistently interesting. Screenwriters Ellis Kadison and Roger Marshall (the latter wrote the glossy but tedious AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! for Amicus in 1972) work in at least one pleasingly imaginative touch, which recalls the infamous Donner Party in its explanation for the killer's vam-

piric tendencies.

The film is well served by an aboveaverage cast. Christopher Lee, wasted in so many Hammer films, is given the opportunity to shine. His character, Philippe Darvas, is the ultimate portrait of director-as-sadist. Lee makes the most of some witty dialogue ("That's about as frightening as an old woman trying to spear a cocktail cherry!") and chews the scenery in an enjoyable fashion, without going fatally over the top. Julian Glover, known to Hammer buffs as the arrogant Colonel Breem in QUATERMASS AND THE PIT (1967), gives an intelligent performance as the obligatory young hero. British stage legend Evelyn Laye is effective as the theater's owner, while newcomer Jenny Till shines in a demand-

Anchor Bay's presentation of THEATRE OF DEATH is first-class, offering stun-

ning colors, a clean image, and a forceful soundtrack. Extras include an 11-minute interview with Lee, which is entertaining even if it barely touches on the film



itself. The actor spends a good bit of time ranting about an "idiotic" critic who wrote that he's never escaped the Dracula image, and somewhat touchingly hints that he's regretful that he didn't do more stage work.

—Troy R. Howarth

BATMAN: THE MOVIE 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment \$19.98

Love it or loathe it, you can't deny that the ABC-TV series BATMAN remains for most people the most instantly recognizable interpretation of DC Comics' legendary Caped Crusader. Indeed, even the majority of hardcore Dark Knight fans acknowledge the significance of Adam West and Co. in making their hero a cultural phenomenon. Although the TV series itself is generally regarded as a classic, the 1966 feature BATMAN (the subtitle "The Movie" has been added on video, apparently to distinguish it from Tim Burton's 1989 epic) has never received the same attention as its boobtube progenitor. Hopefully, Fox Home Entertainment's elaborate DVD release will elevate BATMAN: THE MOVIE to its proper place as a campy classic in the comic-book movie genre.

If you're a regular reader of Scarlet Street, you're probably already familiar with the plot of the film: Batman (West) and Robin (Burt Ward) square off against four of their greatest foes—The Joker (Cesar Romero), The Penguin (Burgess Meredith), The Catwoman (Lee Meriwether), and The Riddler (Frank Gor-

shin). Thrills and laughs ensue.

If you haven't actually watched the movie in its entirety, or if you're still watching that worn-out video, you're in for a revelation. The digital transfer is stunning, so fully restoring the color and sharpness of picture that you'll think you're back in the Bijou in 1966, squealing with delight alongside scores of other young (and not so young) adventure fans.

However, the transfer itself is just one of the goodies on this disc. A commentary track featuring the reminisces of West and Ward is a definite highlight, and the stills gallery contains dozens of rare pho-



tos. Two short subjects chronicle the history of the show and provide a tour of the Batmobile (the latter hosted by George Barris, the car's creator), and several trailers (foreign and domestic) are included to give a taste of the hyperbole surrounding the original theatrical release.

Of all the treats on this DVD, my favorites are the animated feature intros, including the spinning Bat signal and replays of classic dialogue. Truly, this is one Special Edition DVD that lives up to its name! Now if Fox will just follow it up with a similarly lavish DVD release of the TV show

-Ionathan Malcolm Lampley

LUST IN THE DUST **Anchor Bay Entertainment**

The town of Chile Verde has a secret; there's a fortune of stolen gold hidden somewhere in the vicinity, but no one has been able to find it. Rosie Velez (Divine)



shows up to look for it. Able Wood (Tab Hunter) a lonesome drifter, arrives, too, but he doesn't know about the gold. Rosie gets a cleaning job in the town whorehouse, owned by Marguerita (Lainie Kazan). The women quickly become rivals, but nevertheless share a strong tie-they both have half a map on one butt cheek. The map and a limerick are the only clues to the location of the gold. Able learns of the gold from the local Padre (Cesar Romero) and is soon on the hunt, as are the local bad guy (Geoffrey Lewis) and bartender, Big Ed (Nedra Volz). Once the map is put togethercheek to cheek-the race is on!

Directed by Paul Bartel, LUST IN THE DUST (1985) is not as outrageous as expected. (Bartel admitted that he made the film a little bland in hopes of gaining greater mainstream acceptance.) Still, the movie is fun and the actors obviously enjoyed their roles. There's plenty of snappy dialogue, delivered with gusto. Divine and Kazan even get to belt out a bawdy song each. The music is like a bunch of cheesy Western scores all rolled into one, and the film has the corniest title song since BLAZ-ING SADDLES (1974).

LUST was filmed in Super35, so its 2.35:1 framing loses a lot of extraneous picture information at the top and bottom of the frame, while gaining a little more on the sides compared to previous video releases. The print is clear and free of blemishes, with only a few interior scenes appearing a little too dark. The mono audio is well presented. The extrasinclude a tongue-in-cheek theatrical trailer and biographies/filmographies of Divine, Tab Hunter, and Paul Bartel. The real treat, though, is a new featurette on the filming of LUST. The surviving cast and crew are interviewed, while Divine and Bartel are represented through old audio clips. Included is footage of John Waters regular Edith Massey auditioning for the role of Big Ed. It's too bad she wasn't cast, because that probably would have given LUST the little extra something it needed.

Still, any film that ends with Divine crawling through the desert sands a la DUEL IN THE SUN (1946) can't be considered too mainstream.

-Ron Morgan

HARVESTERS **Key East Entertainment** \$24.95

HARVESTERS (2001) is the first new fright film from producer Don Dohler since BLOOD MASSACRE in 1987. In fact, HARVESTERS harkens back to BLOOD MASSACRE, in that it is a variation on that film. The difference-HARVESTERS is the by far more professional and entertaining movie.

Shot on video, the story follows a group of robbers, led by a lesbian former marine named Frankie Faizone (Donna Sherman), as they're chased by US Marshalls Rick McNally (played by the film's director, Joe Ripple) and Nichole Torson (Patty Cipoletti). When the criminals decide to hold the Peelman family (George Stover, Steven King, Erin Palmosano, and Jaime Kalman) hostage in their own home, the plot veers from police thriller into DESPERATE HOURS territory. Then things really get weird .

There are horror fans who rave about Jess Franco's latest shot-on-video productions, but they should really see the superior HARVESTERS. For one thing, the film tells a linear story-and, for anyone seeking some kinkiness, youngest daughter Amy Peelman (Erin Palmisano) takes a very sexy (and literal) blood bath that puts Franco's recent stuff to shame. There's also the drag queen owner of a strip club-appropriate for a Baltimore production, since that city is also home base for the divine (though now sadly Divineless) John Waters.

Admittedly, the limitations of HAR-VESTERS' budget show through-the acting is a bit uneven, the strip club looks like a high school auditorium, the music sounds very eighties synth, and the action slows down somewhat following the



well-staged police raid. (In real as opposed to "reel" life, the director is a poiceman, so the details of the raid appear to be quite accurate.) Matters pick up after we get into the Peelman home and goes into truly frantic hyperdrive toward the film's conclusion.

HARVESTERS contains enough decent surprises to hold one's interest, and also benefits from some good computer and makeup effects. The disc includes a "making of" documentary, a perfect primer for anyone crazy enough to consider making

-Kevin G. Shinnick

THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY Universal Home Video

529 98

While many of Alfred Hitchcock's films contain humorous scenes, the Master of Suspense had only made a couple of overt comedies before THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY (1955). American moviegoers were caught off guard and the film was not a blockbuster on first release. Times change, though, and HARRY is now recognized and appreciated as a wonderfully droll dark comedy.

Harry's dead, flat on his back on a New England hillside. The trouble with Harry is not that he's dead-everyone's fine with that-but that he won't stay buried. Furthermore, no one wants to be held responsible for killing him. Captain Wild (Edmund Gwenn) thinks he shot Harry instead of a rabbit. Rather than bother the police, he decides to bury the corpse. The Captain enlists the aid of local artist Sam Marlowe (John Forsythe), who has been nearby sketching the body. Harry is soon unearthed when the Captain accounts for all his bullets, but only temporarily. Local spinster Miss Gravely (Mildred Natwick) soon thinks she killed Harry, and it's back into the grave for him-temporarily. This goes on all day and into the night, with the victim's estranged wife, Jennifer (Shirley MacLaine), joining the digging party.

Meanwhile, Deputy Wiggs (Royal Dano) grows suspicious and starts to gather clues leading to Harry's elusive corpse. Eventually, Captain Wild and his friends cook up a scheme to extract themselves from the situation with the unknowing aid of Jennifer's son, Arnie (Jerry Mathers).

Every aspect of the production hits the perfect note. Hitchcock proving himself as adept at comedy as he was at suspense. The cast works wonders with the witty and quotable script. (Miss Gravely's explanation for why she killed Harry: "He annoyed me.") The cinematography presents an autumn setting almost unreal in the brilliance of the foliage. HARRY was composer Bernard Herrmann's first collaboration with Hitchcock, and it was a match made in heaven from the start. The score is charming and whimsical, with just the right hint of the macabre.



Universal's DVD is framed at 1.85:1 with a little less top and bottom information than in previous versions, but much needed elbow room on the sides, opening up the frame greatly. The print is flawless. The mono sound is full and delivers the score with great clarity. The extras are skimpy compared to other Hitchcock discs from Universal, but the documentary, though short, is well worth watching. The sparse extras are no reason to pass on this disc, though. You'll have no trouble enjoying THE TROUBLE WITH

-Ron Morgan

Continued on page 74

Random Harvester Don Dohler interviewed by Kevin G. Shinnick

Don Dohler has accomplished what into another distributor who hap-pened to be the son-in-law of the first plished; not only has he published his own fan magazine (Cinemagic, which e produced from 1972 to 1978, before selling to Starlog), but he's also been an ective filmmaker, making four films beween 1978 and 1987. Away from the scene for awhile, his interest in making novies returned in 1999, and the latest result is HARVESTERS (2002). Recently, Scarlet Street interviewed this veteran of the indie scene . . .

Scarlet Street: How did you get interested in filmmaking?

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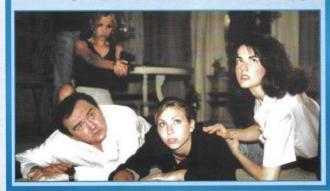
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Continued on page 76





tos. Two short subjects chronicle the history of the show and provide a tour of the Batmobile (the latter hosted by George Barris, the car's creator), and several trailers (foreign and domestic) are included to give a taste of the hyperbole surrounding the original theatrical release.

Of all the treats on this DVD, my favorites are the animated feature intros, including the spinning Bat signal and replays of classic dialogue. Truly, this is one Special Edition DVD that lives up to its name! Now if Fox will just follow it up with a similarly lavish DVD release of the TV show

-Jonathan Malcolm Lampley

LUST IN THE DUST Anchor Bay Entertainment \$24.98

The town of Chile Verde has a secret; there's a fortune of stolen gold hidden somewhere in the vicinity, but no one has been able to find it. Rosie Velez (Divine)



shows up to look for it. Able Wood (Tab Hunter) a lonesome drifter, arrives, too, but he doesn't know about the gold. Rosie gets a cleaning job in the town whore-

house, owned by Marguerita (Lainie Kazan). The women quickly become rivals, but nevertheless share a strong tie—they both have half a map on one butt cheek. The map and a limerick are the only clues to the location of the gold. Able learns of the gold from the local Padre (Cesar Romero) and is soon on the hunt, as are the local bad guy (Geoffrey Lewis) and bartender, Big Ed (Nedra Volz). Once the map is put together—cheek to cheek—the race is on!

Directed by Paul Bartel, LUST IN THE DUST (1985) is not as outrageous as expected. (Bartel admitted that he made the film a little bland in hopes of gaining greater mainstream acceptance.) Still, the movie is fun and the actors obviously enjoyed their roles. There's plenty of snappy dialogue, delivered with gusto. Divine and Kazan even get to belt out a bawdy song each. The music is like a bunch of cheesy Western scores all rolled into one, and the film has the corniest title song since BLAZ-ING SADDLES (1974).

LUST was filmed in Super35, so its 2.35:1 framing loses a lot of extraneous picture information at the top and bottom of the frame, while gaining a little more on the sides compared to previous video releases. The print is clear and free of blemishes, with only a few interior scenes appearing a little too dark. The mono audio is well presented. The extras include a tongue-in-cheek theatrical trailer and biographies/filmographies of Divine, Tab Hunter, and Paul Bartel. The real treat, though, is a new featurette on the filming of LUST. The surviving cast and crew are interviewed, while Divine and Bartel are represented through old audio clips. Included is footage of John Waters regular Edith Massey auditioning for the role of Big Ed. It's too bad she wasn't cast, because that probably would have given LUST the little extra something it needed.

Still, any film that ends with Divine crawling through the desert sands a la DUEL IN THE SUN (1946) can't be considered too mainstream.

-Ron Morgan

HARVESTERS Key East Entertainment \$24.95

HARVESTERS (2001) is the first new fright film from producer Don Dohler since BLOOD MASSACRE in 1987. In fact, HARVESTERS harkens back to BLOOD MASSACRE, in that it is a variation on that film. The difference—HARVESTERS is the by far more professional and entertaining movie.

Shot on video, the story follows a group of robbers, led by a lesbian former marine named Frankie Faizone (Donna Sherman), as they're chased by US Marshalls Rick McNally (played by the film's director, Joe Ripple) and Nichole Torson (Patty Cipoletti). When the criminals decide to hold the Peelman family (George Stover, Steven King, Erin Palmo-

sano, and Jaime Kalman) hostage in their own home, the plot veers from police thriller into DESPERATE HOURS territory. Then things <u>really</u> get weird...

There are horror fans who rave about Jess Franco's latest shot-on-video productions, but they should really see the superior HARVESTERS. For one thing, the film tells a linear story—and, for anyone seeking some kinkiness, youngest daughter Amy Peelman (Erin Palmisano) takes a very sexy (and literal) blood bath that puts Franco's recent stuff to shame. There's also the drag queen owner of a strip club—appropriate for a Baltimore production, since that city is also home base for the divine (though now sadly Divineless) John Waters.

Admittedly, the limitations of HAR-VESTERS' budget show through—the acting is a bit uneven, the strip club looks like a high school auditorium, the music sounds very eighties synth, and the action slows down somewhat following the



well-staged police raid. (In real as opposed to "reel" life, the director is a policeman, so the details of the raid appear to be quite accurate.) Matters pick up after we get into the Peelman home and goes into truly frantic hyperdrive toward the film's conclusion.

HARVESTERS contains enough decent surprises to hold one's interest, and also benefits from some good computer and makeup effects. The disc includes a "making of" documentary, a perfect primer for anyone crazy enough to consider making a movie.

-Kevin G. Shinnick

THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY Universal Home Video \$29.98

While many of Alfred Hitchcock's films contain humorous scenes, the Master of Suspense had only made a couple of overt comedies before THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY (1955). American moviegoers were caught off guard and the film was not a blockbuster on first release. Times change, though, and HARRY is now recognized and appreciated as a wonderfully droll dark comedy.

Harry's dead, flat on his back on a New England hillside. The trouble with Harry is not that he's dead-everyone's fine with that-but that he won't stay buried. Furthermore, no one wants to be held responsible for killing him. Captain Wild (Edmund Gwenn) thinks he shot Harry instead of a rabbit. Rather than bother the police, he decides to bury the corpse. The Captain enlists the aid of local artist Sam Marlowe (John Forsythe), who has been nearby sketching the body. Harry is soon unearthed when the Captain accounts for all his bullets, but only temporarily. Local spinster Miss Gravely (Mildred Natwick) soon thinks she killed Harry, and it's back into the grave for him-temporarily. This goes on all day and into the night, with the victim's estranged wife, Jennifer (Shirley MacLaine), joining the digging party.

Meanwhile, Deputy Wiggs (Royal Dano) grows suspicious and starts to gather clues leading to Harry's elusive corpse. Eventually, Captain Wild and his friends cook up a scheme to extract themselves from the situation with the unknowing aid of Jennifer's son, Arnie (Jer-

ry Mathers).

Every aspect of the production hits the perfect note, Hitchcock proving himself as adept at comedy as he was at suspense. The cast works wonders with the witty and quotable script. (Miss Gravely's explanation for why she killed Harry: "He annoyed me.") The cinematography presents an autumn setting almost unreal in the brilliance of the foliage. HARRY was composer Bernard Herrmann's first collaboration with Hitchcock, and it was a match made in heaven from the start. The score is charming and whimsical, with just the right hint of the macabre.



Universal's DVD is framed at 1.85:1 with a little less top and bottom information than in previous versions, but much needed elbow room on the sides, opening up the frame greatly. The print is flawless. The mono sound is full and delivers the score with great clarity. The extras are skimpy compared to other Hitchcock discs from Universal, but the documentary, though short, is well worth watching. The sparse extras are no reason to pass on this disc, though. You'll have no trouble enjoying THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY.

-Ron Morgan

Continued on page 74

Random Harvester Don Dohler

interviewed by Kevin G. Shinnick

on Dohler has accomplished what very few film fans have accomplished: not only has he published his own fan magazine (Cinemagic, which he produced from 1972 to 1978, before selling to Starlog), but he's also been an active filmmaker, making four films between 1978 and 1987. Away from the scene for awhile, his interest in making movies returned in 1999, and the latest result is HARVESTERS (2002). Recently, Scarlet Street interviewed this veteran of the indie scene....

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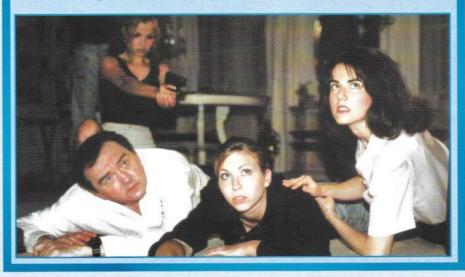
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SIDE STREETS

Guifight

AT THE DVD CORPAL

by Mark Clark

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Many of the great (and many of the not-so-great) Westerns have emerged on DVD. Scarlet Street has rounded up a herd of them for your consideration. Saddle up and we'll mosey through 10 titles, sizing up the good, the bad, and the ugly. In chronological order, they stack up this way:

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The only extras are short and poorly written (sometimes factually incorrect) production notes and the film's original theatrical trailer. We can only hope that eventually Warner Bros. will replace this version with a fully restored, bonus-packed Special Edition.

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The usual Selznick virtues are on display here-masterful cinematography, lavish production values. Unfortunately, the usual Selznick liabilities are also present-crushing, bombastic self-importance and offensive "funny slave" comedy relief. (Butterfly McQueen, famous as Prissy in GONE WITH THE WIND, appears here as Vashti) The film's title showdown proves anticlimactic. Selznick should have titled this one AMBUSH IN THE SUN.

On the plus side, Anchor Bay offers the original Roadshow cut of the film, complete with entrance and exit music, as well as an overture. The print is a stunning Technicolor marvel and the sound is pin-drop perfect. Toss in three trailers for good measure and you have a package finer than its contents deserve.

VENGEANCE VALLEY The Roan Group

VENGEANCE VALLEY (1951) provided Burt Lancaster with his first Western role, and he took to the genre immediately. His convincing and moving performance provides the main selling point for this otherwise slow-footed production.

Lancaster plays the adopted son of a wealthy rancher, who pulls his adoptive brother (Robert Walker) out of endless scrapes. Then Walker decides to doublecross his own father, putting the inevitable brother against brother showdown in order. It's not a bad yarn, but not a particularly memorable one, either. The DVD was tapped from a superb three-strip Technicolor print with clean sound-easily the best-looking disc yet from the Roan Group.





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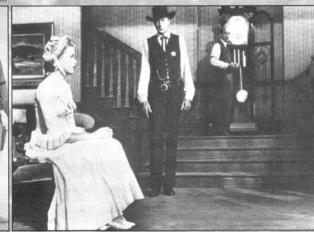
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Paramount offers a gorgeous color print of the film with excellent sound. The disc also features the theatrical trailer and an audio commentary by George Stevens Jr. (the son of the film's director), who reads from his father's illuminating

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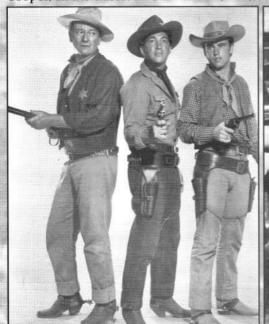
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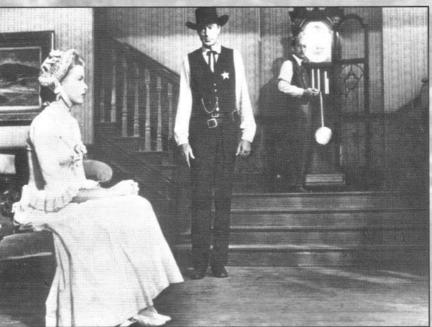
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"Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-"Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green. Invest him with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect, with all the re-sources of science past and present, with all the re-sources, if you will, of a wealthy government— which, however, already has denied all knowledge of his existence. Imagine that awful being, and you have a mental picture of Dr. Fu-Manchu, the velhave a mental picture of Dr. Fu-Manchu, the yellow peril incarnate in one man."

-Sax Rohmer, The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu (1913)

Professor James Moriarty! Fantomas! Auric Goldfinger! Ernst Stavros Blofeld! Popular fiction teems with colorful miscreants plotting everything from a simple spot of domestic burglary to total world domination. Perhaps none-not even Sherlock Holmes' arch nemesis, the Napoleon of Crime, Moriarty—is more deprayed than the man who came to be known as the Yellow

Peril Incarnate: Dr. Fu Manchu! The Devil Doctor (another of his sobriquets) first saw life in 1913, when 30-year-old Arthur Sarsfield Ward wrote The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu under the pen name Sax Rohmer. Twelve sequels followed, concluding shortly before Rohmer died in 1959 with Emperor Fu Manchu—the same year Richard Condon's The Manchurian Candidate, whose antecedents include the novel President Fu Manchu (1936), was published. (Rohmer's cold-blooded megalomaniac has served as a template for villainy not only here on Earth, but far, far beyond our solar system-to the renegade planet Mongo, in fact, where resides Fu Manchu's mad,

mustachioed lookalike, Ming the Merciless.) Not one to let the death of his creator interfere with his ambitions, Fu Manchu doubtless vowed, "The world will hear from me again!"—and it did, in Rohmer's post-humously published short-story collection The Wrath of Fu Manchu, which appeared in 1973. Two pastiches by Rohmer's biographer, Cay Van Ash, followed—Ten Years Beyond Baker Street (1984), in which Sherlock Holmes came out of retirement to rescue Fu's perennial opponent, Sir Denis Nayland Smith, from the cunning fiend, and The Fires of Fu Manchu (1987), in which Van Ash sought to fill in some gaps in Fu's early history.

Fu Manchu lived on in the movies, too. The villain

had made his motion picture debut in 1923, in a British chapterplay titled THE MYSTERY OF FU MANCHU. Harry Agar Lyons starred as Fu in the 15 episodes, supported by Fred P. Paul as Smith and H. Humberstone Wright as Dr. Petrie (the narrator/companion who plays faithful Watson to Smith's Holmes). The chapter titles echoed the pulp-fiction sensationalism of the Rohmer originals, and included "The Scented Envelopes," "The Fungi Cellar," "The Fiery Hand," and "The Shrine of Seven Lamps." The cast returned the following year for THE FURTHER MYSTERIES OF FU MANCHU, which included "The Coughing Horror," "The Green Mist," and "The Golden Pomegranates."

Fu found a voice in 1929, with Warner Oland starring as THE MYSTERIOUS DR. FU MANCHU and making the character more sympathetic (and less interesting) than he had ever been in Rohmer's stories. Oland reprised the part in THE RETURN OF FU MANCHU (1930) and DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON (1931), before moving on to his interest are released. Change and leaving the villaint to signature role of Charlie Chan and leaving the villainy to the King of Horror—Boris Karloff. THE MASK OF FU MANCHU (1932) is unquestion-THE MASK OF FU MANCHU (1932) is unquestionably one of the most outlandish motion pictures ever lensed at that most glamorous and family-oriented of Hollywood studios, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and Karloff is more than equal to the task of drugging, torturing, and dispatching his fellow performers. Though he never thought terribly much of the film, the star brought to his role "a wonderful crazy, brayura humor."

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Fah Lo See, Fu's joyfully sadistic daughter, was Myrna Loy, still 14 movies shy of screen immortality as Nora Charles in THE THIN MAN (1934).

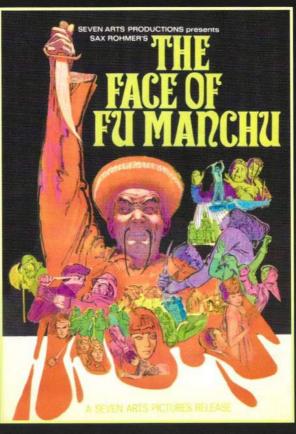
According to Cay Van Ash,
MGM planned further Fu Manchu films, but the studio was
thwarted. "They were curiously
obstructed by urgent protests
from the Chinese Embassy in Washington. The Chinese diplomats took a humorless view of Fu Manchu, whom they considered damaging to their 'image.' At this time, the West in general, and America in particular, was be-coming alarmed by the rapid ex-pansion of Japan in the Far East, and rather inclined to encourage China as a potential ally against this threat. Consequently, the protest received closer attention than it might otherwise have done." (Master of Villainy: A Biography of Sax Rohmer, Cay Van Ash and Elizabeth Sax Rohmer, Bowling Green University

Popular Press, 1972.)

Henry Brandon inherited the role for the 1940 Republic cliffhanger THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, playing effectively but unfortunately adopting the same rather high-pitched, singsong, stereotypical "Chinese" voice used in several radio series featuring the doctor. Nevertheless, DRUMS' 15 chapters were among the finest ever produced for serials, and the film was a considerable hit. Again, a sequel was planned. Again, a protest was launched, convincing the studio to abandon FU MANCHU STRIKES BACK.

Fu's voice went up another octave (or two!) when Glen Gordon briefly took over the role for the threadbare 1956 television series THE ADVENTURES OF FU MANCHU. (In 1952, an unsold TV pilot directed by William Cameron Menzies had starred a potentially perfect John Carradine as Fu, and featured Sir Cedric Hardwicke as Smith.) THE ADVENTURES' failure to last beyond 13 episodes, coupled with Rohmer's death, appeared to be portents of coupled with Rohmer's death, appeared to be portents of doom for the man Sir Denis called "Evil Incarnate!"

Then, in the early sixties, Don Bensen, an editor for Pyramid Books, returned Fu Manchu to book-rack stardom with a series of popular reprints. The paperbacks revived interest in Rohmer's dated (some would say racist) oeuvre, and proved irresistible to producer Harry Alan





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As is so often the case, the Devil Doctor's latest scheme hinges on the kidnapping of various and sundry scientists who possess the knowledge he currently requires, and the acquisition of the scientists' beautiful daughters as a means of exacting their compliance. In this particular instance, the scientist is Professor Hans Muller (Walter Rilla), a biochemist, and the daughter is the lovely Maria (Karin Dor). Muller ("the foremost authority in Europe") is lured to St. Luke's cemetery in Limehouse with the promise of poppies. (No, the Wicked Witch of the West doesn't figure into it.) There, he is surrounded by dacoits, Fu's fanatical henchmen, who strangle their victims with Tibetan prayer scarves. Muller's chauffeur, Matthius (Jim Norton), is murdered thusly, but the professor is greeted by Fu himself, who ushers him into a strange and sinister mausoleum adorned with statuary containing spy holes instead of eves. (One particular statue, perched atop the roof, serves as a periscope.) The mausoleum, we shall learn, leads to the villain's underground lair on the banks of the Thames.

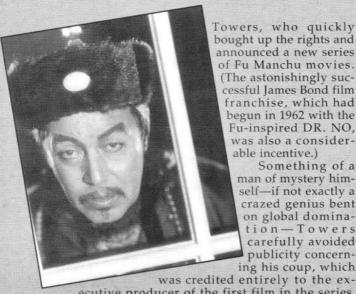
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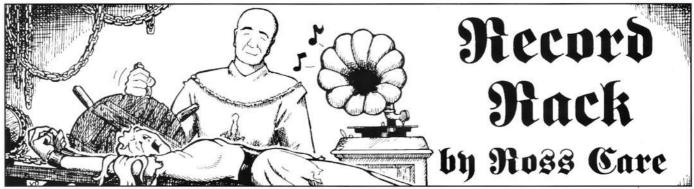
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Mhen Alfred Newman took over as music director for the newly merged 20th Century Fox in 1940, it marked the beginning of a remarkable epoch of American film music. Almost immediately, Fox became noted for a succession of brilliant orchestral scores and buoyant film musicals, which peaked in the CinemaScope era of the early fifties. Now, thanks to Lukas Kendall of Film Score Monthly, and executive producer, Nick Redman, the profuse Fox musical legacy is available in a series of CDs that offer a gourmet banquet of vintage film music-with a course or two of junk food thrown in for good measure.

Under Newman's legendary direction, the Fox musical legacy stretches well over three decades. THE SONG OF BER-NADETTE (1944) inspired one of the first commercially released albums of serious symphonic film music when Alfred Newman's score was released as a 78 rpm set on Decca Records. When Cinema-Scope was unveiled with the biblical epic THE ROBE (1953), Fox pioneered the first viable system of stereophonic sound heard on a widespread basis. Again the score was by Newman, and it appeared on a Decca (mono-only) LP. In the late fifties, Fox even launched its own record label, key releases ranging from Newman's traditionally poignant THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (1959) through Mikis Theodorakis's delirious acoustic-techno mod score to Michael Cacoyannis's futuristic fantasy, THE DAY THE FISH CAME OUT (1967).

Fast forward to the nineties, when producer Nick Redman masterminded a series of Fox CDs in conjunction with Varese Sarabande Records. One was the original stereo soundtrack to THE ROBE, but the fact that only a few more discs (including David Raksin's 1944 LAURA) followed in this exciting series was a major blow to fans of vintage film music. Enter Lukas Kendall, who, in conjunction with Redman, has revived the Fox legacy in a series of limited edition Film Score Monthly CDs offering a cross-section of the prolific and amazingly varied output of arguably the greatest music department of the studio era.

HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE and THE BEST OF EVERYTHING

Thanks to CinemaScope and "The Wonder of 4-Track Directional Stereophonic Sound," many of the FSM releases are available in authentic stereo. HOW TO

MARRY A MILLIONAIRE (1953) was the second 'Scope film, and contrasted the intense religious drama of THE ROBE with a frothy comedy set in fifties New York. Even in the 'Scope era, Fox still sometimes adhered to the thirties practice of collective scoring (the film itself is derived from several thirties pictures), and MILLIONAIRE (FSM Vol. 4, No. 2) is actually the work of several musicians. Cyril J. Mockridge is credited with "Incidental Music," but much of his score is developed from an uncredited Lionel Newman/Ken Darby song, "New York,"



BLUE DENIM (1959) broke ground with an early expose of a taboo Hollywood topic—teen pregnancy—and was somewhat incongruously scored by Bernard Herrmann. The picture starred blonde near-lookalikes Carol Lynley and Brandon De Wilde.

which is heard in a vivid orchestral/choral arrangement under the opening travelogue. The rest of the score features slick arrangements of popular standards. In the film, Newman himself is seen conducting his music from STREET SCENE (1931), in a prologue showcasing the Fox symphony and the new stereophonic sound system.

THE BEST OF EVERYTHING (1959) brings the Fox 'Scope fifties to a glossy—if somewhat lurid—finale. Though based on the 1958 best-seller by Rona Jaffe, THE BEST OF EVERYTHING (FSM Vol. 4, No. 11) is still a kind of melodramatic mirror inversion of MILLIONAIRE, a sensational

(adultery, abortion, suicide) saga of three working girls that, as the ad blurb used to say, rips the lid off the emerging New York City paperback publishing business. (The film might well be subtitled WHEN WOMEN WORE WHITE GLOVES TO THE OFFICE).

The music (other than for a few source cues) is all by Alfred Newman, who forsook the historical world he evoked so well to here evoke the tangled romances and icy glamour of contemporary New York. The melody of the title song, sung by Johnny Mathis a la his distinctive Ray Ellis singles mode of the late fifties, provides much of the material for the score, along with a coolly sophisticated theme that seems to limn the dangers of life and love in the big city. First heard as a kind of urban concerto for piano and orchestra in the Main Title, this secondary "New York" theme also runs throughout the score, sometimes attaching itself to the character of Gregg (gorgeous model Suzy Parker), an aspiring actress who tragically obsesses on a heel theater director, played by Louis Jourdan. Like the song melody, the piano/New York theme undergoes a number of variations in the profuse (34 track) score, including a few ("Gregg's Dementia," "Death for Gregg") that, somewhat incongruously, suggest the mythic drama of THE ROBE. There's even a theme for the cynical "older woman," Amanda Farrow, portrayed by the unsinkable Joan Crawford as she approached the fifth decade of her Hollywood career! As I personally have always taken all too seriously the message of the film's fatalistic title song, the glossy and never before released THE BEST OF EV-ERYTHING score is one of my favorites among the FSM discs.

VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA and BATMAN: THE MOVIE

While I always considered the rise of producer Irwin Allen symptomatic of the death of quality old guard Hollywood filmmaking, his stint at Fox apparently helped bail out the studio after the fiasco of CLEOPATRA (1963). A key film in the Allen/Fox canon is VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA (1961), the film that launched a thousand TV series, and a prototype of the transitional studio-to-independent production method of the early sixties. (Like many of these productions, it's also a film in which seasoned veterans such as Walter Pidgeon, Joan Fontaine, and Peter Lorre faced off with

young newcomers Frankie Avalon and booty-shaking Barbara Eden).

If the production values of Allen's films anticipate the low-budget kitsch of his later TV series—and they do—with FSM's original soundtrack (Vol. 4, No. 10) I was surprised to find VOYAGE's score to be a class act all the way. This excellent music is mostly the unique teamwork of Paul Sawtell and Bert Shefter, two Europeanborn composers who (as the notes explain) "began their work in Hollywood in 1955 and thereafter used their unique working relationship to respond to the pressure-cooker environment of quickie low-budget and exploitation film production, cranking out massive amounts of music in short periods of time."

A third collaborator on the score is Russell Faith, who created a surprisingly lyrical song to an unwieldy title (here sung, of course, by Avalon). The opening notes of Faith's tune are also developed in many of the score's more lyrical passages, while Sawtell and Shefter come to the fore with some sophisticated and powerfully dissonant suspense/action cues: "The Squid/The Monster At-

tacks," and so on.

VOYAGE is a score that suggests everything from Roger Edens' "Sea Wall" cue in THE PIRATE (1948) to Friedhofer's lush impressionism for the earlier BOY ON A DOLPHIN (1957), while still maintaining a distinctive originality all its own. With the plus of a huge orchestra in fine stereo sound, three bonus tracks (including an alternate title tune, a campy "let's take a dip, a little trip" waltz that sounds like something out of SPRING-TIME FOR HITLER), and more harp glissandi than BENEATH THE 12-MILE REEF (1953, also released by FSM), I found all 56 minutes of VOYAGE a unique, consistently fascinating surprise.

While the fab original Bat Theme was created by Neal Hefti, Nelson Riddle composed most of the other music for the faddish sixties TV series BATMAN, which Fox turned into an "All-Brand-New! Never Seen on TV!" feature in 1966. ("Beneath that batcape, he's all man!") Like

Hefti, Riddle was primarily grounded in a big-band sound that by the sixties was dying a slow death, thanks to the birth of rock 'n' roll in the late fifties. Best-known for his prolific work as arranger/conductor for Capitol Records—he had a substantial Top Ten hit with his instrumental single, "Lisbon Antiqua," in 1956—Riddle also dabbled in TV (ROUTE 66), film arranging (PAL JOEY, 1957), and scoring (including a number of cues of Kubrick's LOLITA, 1962).

While one of my current favorite vintage LPs is Riddle's Capitol album, LOVE TIDE (a lush, atmospheric orchestral arrangements of popular standards), I find his original scoring somewhat generic. Unlike Hefti, Riddle never made the leap from big band to rock, and his BATMAN music lacks the "Pop-with-a-capital-P" punch Hefti brought to his main theme and a later series of Batman-inspired albums on RCA Victor.

BATMAN (FSM Vol. 3, No. 7) provides 27 Bat Tracks of Riddle's film score, mostly in a brassy big band mode. While the music is fun up to a point, it seems to noodle around too much to justify an hour's-length listen. (Admittedly, there isn't much opportunity for emotional nuance with BATMAN.) To boot, the sound is mono, a bit pinched, and the performance sometimes ragged. Riddle's most memorable theme is a kind of all-purpose "Bat-Vehicle" motif that recurs throughout, but the CD only really takes off with the few, all too brief reprises of Hefti's driving, blues-based Bat Theme.

THE ILLUSTRATED MAN and STAGECOACH

One of the few non-Fox releases in the FSM series, Jerry Goldsmith's score for THE ILLUSTRATED MAN (1969) is also one of the most remarkable. While even the liner notes concur that films based on the works of Ray Bradbury seldom work cinematically, two adaptations, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN and FAHRENHEIT 451 (1966), produced exceptional scores that are truer to the Bradbury spirit than the films themselves. While Bernard

Herrmann's music for FAHRENHEIT is pretty much in the expected Herrmann mold, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN is like nothing heard in a film up to that point. Probably only Goldsmith could follow a simple, almost naked main title melody for solo soprano and a few judiciously scored instruments with cues that absorb every trick in the 20th-century compositional book (evoking everyone from Bartok and Alban Berg to Schoenberg, Pendericki, and Boulez) and still come up with something both strikingly original and cohesive.

The FSM disc (Vol. 4, No. 14) provides 42 minutes of never before released Goldsmith, organized, like the film itself, as a prologue and three suitelike sections. Much of the music is in an almost minimalist cast, rising to symphonic heights only in brief but electrifying jolts. Everything, however, is scored with the breathtaking originality of instrumental color that characterized the early Goldsmith, and which here runs the gamut from traditional orchestral instruments to guitars, recorder, sitar, and synthesizers!

THE ILLUSTRATED MAN is mastered from well-preserved three-track tapes, and showcases this swirling phantasmagoria of sound in superb stereo. The chamber passages are amazing in their detail and spatial definition, but when the score does rise to its few climaxes (as in "The Sun Dome," "The Morning After," and the two final cues) they are some of the most sonically amazing passages I've heard on CD. The disc also features the film's electronic passages, in mono only, but sometimes (as in "Quiet Evening") dynamically fused with orchestra. From the standpoint of both content and sonics, this release is simply astonishing, absolute vintage Goldsmith, and some of the most amazing and original fantasy music ever created in Hollywood.

The orchestral wizardry of Goldsmith is also contrastingly represented on FSM by the 1966 version of STAGECOACH (Vol. 1, No. 1). Goldsmith's STAGE-

Continued on page 76

LEFT: Marilyn Monroe found herself surrounded by two detective film icons—William Powell (1934's THE THIN MAN) and Lauren Bacall (1946's THE BIG SLEEP) in the delightful comedy romp HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE (1953). RIGHT: The Caped Crusaders (Adam West and Burt Ward) made their way from television to the big screen in the ultra-campy BATMAN (1966).





The Elusive Harry BARRY ALAN TOWERS

interviewed by Terry Pace



They seek him here
They seek him there
Those Frenchies seek him everywhere
Is he in Heaven
Or is he in Hell?
That damned elusive Pimpernel
—THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL

kike The Scarlet Pimpernel, or perhaps Harry Lime, that charming, sophisticated rogue at the center of his most famous radio series, the name of Harry Alan Towers resonates with more than half a century of perplexing mysteries, dual identities, cryptic contradictions, and startling surprises.

Darting in and out of the shadows, slipping from continent to continent, Towers—the rules-bending, bare-budget producer who restored Orson Welles to his shady signature role for radio's THE MANY LIVES OF HARRY LIME—maneuvers his way through a global shadow world that casually mixes the grander virtues of Victorian literature with the baser values of 20th-century

screen exploitation.

At the height of the hip-and-swinging sixties, Towers and Spanish schlock-meister Jess Franco cast GOLDFINGER Bond beauty Shirley Eaton as Sumuru, a sexy, out-of-this-world villainess envisioned by Fu Manchu creator Sax Rohmer. Towers even lured squeaky-clean Frankie Avalon into appearing in 1967's THE MILLION EYES OF SUMURU, a mod-era testament to sex, violence, and depravity. According to one source, the enterprising producer was "busted for hiring high-class call girls" to play curvaceous superwomen enslaved to the cruel and ruthless Sumuru.

Another tall tale associated with Towers, recounted in The Best of the Darkside 1967, producer Towers made arrangements to film HOUSE OF A THOU-SAND DOLLS in Spain, featuring an oddball cast made up of the still-bankable Price, plus Martha Hyer and George Nader. Since the producer suspected that the lurid white-slavery melodrama would never pass the disapproving eye of the censors, he slipped the powersthat-be a more sanitary script, a primand-proper historical piece called ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS. As the story goes, Towers arranged to have an actor wearing a stovepipe hat conspicuously present on the premises at all times, giving the set for his sensational thriller a deceptively Lincolnesque look.

Many of the infamous, unscrupulous tales surrounding Harry Alan Towers may be apocryphal, but they are certainly indicative of the colorful reputation attached to this eclectic show-biz impresario (whose longtime alter ego is screenwriter Peter Welbeck). At an age when most of his contemporaries are dead, retired, out of work, or out of vogue, Towers endures, propelled by a disarming attitude of passion, resilience, resourcefulness, and seasoned survival of the fittest. In the realms of radio and television, he is rightfully regarded as an

international pioneer of the forties and fifties. However, the quality of his films from 1963 onward varies from the embarrassingly awful (1968's THE FACE OF EVE) and gloriously guilty pleasures (1969's 99 WOMEN) to the surprisingly sound and sturdy (1965's THE FACE OF FU MANCHU). Through it all, the child star who grew up to build Towers of London into one of the world's longest-lasting independent production companies continues to live many, many lives as both a prolific writer and producer.

"As long as there are projects to be developed, scripts to be written, and films to be made, I have no plans to retire," the 81-year-old Towers remarked in a recent telephone interview from his home in



Page 38: Harry Alan Towers (Insert) had no tional fantasies of Jules Verne and H.G. Price's most unpleasant feature films. In 1967, producer Towers made arrangements to film HOUSE OF A THOU-SAND DOLLS in Spain, featuring an oddball cast made up of the still-bankable Price, plus Martha Hyer and George Nader. Since the producer suspected that the lurid white-slavery melodrama that the lurid white-slavery me

Toronto, Canada. "As long as I'm physically able to write scripts and produce films, to travel around the world and put the pieces together, I'll keep going as long as I can. The end of it all won't be up to me—that's in the hands of God."

Towers' lively, wide-ranging interview with Scarlet Street occurred during a rare pause in the moviemaker's mind-boggling travel and production schedule. Pending projects include modern-day revivals of Rohmer's diabolical, larger-thanlife villains, Fu Manchu and Sumuru, as well as already-lensed versions of two frequently filmed literary favorites, H. Rider Haggard's She and Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (filmed this time as simply DORIAN). Towers is also preparing a new, youth-oriented Sherlock Holmes movie adventure, with Malcolm McDowell donning a deerstalker and smoking a Calabash pipe as the latest actor to portray the world's most cunning detective. In the months ahead, Towers will also be preparing feature films based on the lives of well-known writers as diverse as Romantic poet Lord Byron and American novelist Ernest Hemingway.

A native of London, Towers began his career as a British child actor in the years between the two world wars. As a boy, he developed into a voracious reader, cultivating personal tastes that leaned toward literature of a mysterious, fantastic, or romantic nature. Through the indelible influence of boyhood interests and early professional pursuits, Towers fell in love with the thrills and excitement of show business, maintaining a lifelong passion for imagination, drama, and old-fashioned storytelling.

My father was very well-read, and he had this big library," Towers recalled. "It included everything from first editions of books by wonderful Victorian and Edwardian writers to original copies of the old Strand magazine, where the Sherlock Holmes stories originally appeared. I inherited my father's library, which I still have and still treasure. Those books inspired my interest in stories of that age and time. Many of the films I have done over the years have dealt with that particular period. Even when they haven't been specifically set in that era, many of them have preserved that distinctive period flavor.

In a career spanning more than six decades, Towers (often using his Welbeck pseudonym) has been associated with radio, television, or movie adaptations of the adventure yarns of Rohmer, Haggard, and Jack London, the horror chillers of Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, and Stephen King, the mystery thrillers of Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Edgar Wallace, and the science-fictional fantasies of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Towers' filmography as a producer and screenwriter includes titles based on published works by authors ranging from Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde to Alistair MacLean and Len Deighton.

"They're all favorites, I must say many of them from when I was a boy," Towers happily confessed. "Those writers are responsible for some of the most popular stories ever published—stories that in most cases have stood the test

of time.

During the World War II era, Towers blazed new trails in the field of radio drama. Working as both writer and producer, the young, energetic British showman developed international projects for such prestigious names as Noel Coward, Laurence Olivier, James Mason, John Gielgud, Michael Redgrave, Ralph Richardson, and Welles. Shows produced by the Towers of London organization featured such classic characters as Sherlock Holmes, Horatio Hornblower, the Scarlet Pimpernel, and even Harry Lime, Graham Greene's disreputable blackmarket racketeer from 1949's THE THIRD MAN. (In the LIME radio series, the character was softened significantly. Towers and Welles transformed Lime into more of a suave, sophisticated confidence



Towers' 1965 TEN LITTLE INDIANS may not have erased fond memories of the 1945 production (titled AND THEN THERE WERE NONE) of Agatha Christie's 1939 mystery, but it was fine enough entertainment in its own right: Pictured Left to Right: Hugh O'Brian, Shirley Eaton, Fabian, Leo Genn, Mario Adorf, Wilfrid Hyde-White, Dennis Price, Daliah Lavi, and Stanley Holloway.

man instead of the deadly, ruthless villain depicted in Carol Reed's classic movie thriller.)

"Those radio programs can still be heard today," Towers noted. "They've been played and replayed, and many of them are still reaching new generations. Fifty years after we made them, they've taken on a life of their own. They're reaching new listeners all the time."

In the early fifties, Towers shifted his focus from the fading medium of radio to the flourishing phenomenon of television. He directed the British ATV and was the programming director for Associated Television, London's first contractor of weekend television programs. Over the next decade, Towers created and produced more than 20 successful smallscreen series. He recruited Fredric March to host the Victorian anthology TALES FROM DICKENS and restored William Gargan to his familiar role as a hardbitten New York private eye in THE RE-TURN OF MARTIN KANE. During an amazing period of prosperity and popularity, Towers' television series included DÍAL 999, THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO, MANTOVANI, and THE SCAR-LET PIMPERNEL.

"Television was in the midst of an exciting period of expansion and experimentation, and I became a free-lance television producer—just as I had been an independent radio producer," Towers explained. "The shows we created during that time were syndicated around the world."

Since the early sixties, Towers has concentrated his career on writing and producing feature films for both theatrical release and television distribution. For close to four decades, his steady stream of B-movies, potboilers, programmers, family films, and literary adaptations have been populated with such genre favorites as Welles, Price, George Sanders, Christopher Lee, Charlton Heston, Klaus Kinski, Herbert Lom, Donald Pleasence, Oliver Reed, Jack Palance, John Carradine, Terry-Thomas, Shelley Winters, and Robert Vaughn. As a globe-trotting movie producer, Towers has mounted projects for directors ranging from British journeymen Don Sharp and John Llewellyn Moxey to European sleaze merchants Franco and Bud Cardos.

In 1965, Towers brought Agatha Christie's best-known mystery novel to the screen with TEN LITTLE INDIANS (1966), featuring a cast that ranged from American leading men Hugh O'Brian and Fabian to British character actors Stanley Holloway and Wilfrid Hyde-White. Towers then tossed Lee (playing the strong man Gregor) into the three-ring terror of PSYCHO-CIRCUS (1966) before recruiting Tony Randall for the spy comedy BANG! BANG! YOU'RE DEAD! (1966). The next year, Towers rounded up the offbeat intercontinental cast of Robert Cummings, George Raft, Brian Donlevy, Dan Duryea, Lee, and Kinski for the espionage thriller FIVE GOLDEN DRAGONS. Also in '67, Towers cast Burl Ives as P.T. Barnum in the lightweight Jules Verne fantasy ROCKET TO THE MOON. At the end of the decade, he wrote and produced Franco's notorious lesbians-behind-bars exploitation epic, 99 WOMEN, featuring Lom, Maria Schell, and Mercedes McCambridge. That same year, Towers cast Kinski as the crazed Marquis de Sade in JUSTINE before reuniting Lee and Franco for the cult horror chiller NIGHT OF THE BLOOD MONSTER.

Between the years 1964 and 1968, Towers brought to the screen Rohmer's fiendish criminal mastermind, Fu Manchu, in a popular series of films starring the appropriately sinister Lee as the Chinese super-villain. The initial entry in the series was Sharp's THE FACE OF FU MANCHU. Before the movie opened, Towers and the picture's promoters jumped on the Bond bandwagon by dubbing the so-called "Yellow Peril" thriller "ChopSuey Bond."

"The first one should have been the last one, in my opinion, because it was the only really good one," Lee remarked in Robert W. Pohle Jr. and Douglas C. Hart's *The Films of Christopher Lee* (1983, Scarecrow Press). "It was the old, old story: when you get a popular type of picture, people do it to death as with the Dracula films."

In spite of his reluctance to reprise the role of the Oriental Napoleon of Crime, Lee reteamed with Towers for increasingly inferior followups—THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU (1966), THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU (1967), THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU (1968), and THE CASTLE OF FU MANCHU (made in 1969, but not released in the states until 1972). The films' star dismissed the sequels as "absurd," "cheap" and "ridiculous," even though he returned to the

TOP RIGHT: Christopher Lee continued his sometimes stormy association with Towers in 1990, when he played the World's Greatest Detective (opposite Morgan Fairchild and Patrick Macnee as Irene Adler and Dr. Watson) in SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE LEADING LADY, a TV miniseries. CENTER RIGHT: Prompted by the success of MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (1974), Towers revisited TEN LITTLE INDIANS (1975), which featured as one of its victims the producer's wife, Maria Rohm. Oliver Reed, Alberto De Mendoza, and Elke Sommer also starred. BOTTOM RIGHT: This topless tussel in THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU (1966) was nowhere in sight in the American release.

role time and again until the series finally fizzled.

At the dawn of the seventies, Towers continued crisscrossing the globe and weaving a colorful tapestry of international coproductions. He orchestrated a faithful adaptation of Stoker's classic vampire novel, casting Lee (who else?) in the title role of Franco's COUNT DRAC-ULA (1970). Again, Lee was not entirely pleased with the lifeless, low-budget results, although he did applaud producer/cowriter Towers and director/cowriter Franco for at least attempting to film Stoker's strange, eerie narrative as it was original conceived.

"This was the only time in my life that I was able to pay some sort of tribute to Stoker," the actor observed in *The Films of Christopher Lee*. "The script was based to a great extent on Stoker's book, but it was only a shadow of what it should have been. But it was the nearest approach—with all its pitfalls—to Stoker's story, in

every way."

That same year, the enterprising Towers revived Wilde's tortured tale of DORIAN GRAY (1970) with Helmut Berger (in the title role), Richard Todd, and Lom. Following a box-office triumph with the screen version of Anna Sewell's BLACK BEAUTY (1971), Towers teamed with American box-office champion Heston for a rugged version of London's best-known Klondike adventure, CALL OF THE WILD (1972). The producer then resumed his long-standing association with his HARRY LIME star for yet another cinematic adaptation of Stevenson's seafaring adventure saga, TREASURE ISLAND (1972).

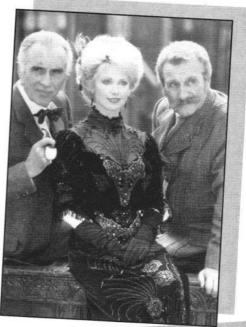
Orson Welles had planned to do his own film of TREASURE ISLAND, but the producer he was working with refused to finance it," Towers told Scarlet Street. "We started putting together our own TREASURE ISLAND, and Orson naturally wanted to direct it. Now, Orson was a brilliant director, of course, and I wanted so much to be able to turn it over to him. But I knew I couldn't count on him to finish it on time and under budget. So I did the best I could. He worked on the screenplay, and we cast him as Long John Silver. But we turned the direction over to John Hough, who did a nice job and delivered the film on time. I'm sorry that Orson and I didn't do more films together."

The Stevenson adventure was followed by a second remake of Christie's TEN LITTLE INDIANS, this time called AND THEN THERE WERE NONE (1974), starring Reed, Richard Attenborough, and Elke Sommer. With a cast headed by Jack Palance and Carol Lynley, Towers

even dared to produce a low-budget, little-seen 1979 remake of the 1936 sci-fi movie classic THINGS TO COME, this time using the full title of Wells' novel, THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME.

In the eighties and nineties, Towers' hit-and-miss filmography has included such low points as the screen version of John Cleland's erotic drama FANNY HILL (1983) with Reed and Winters, the military adventure SKELETON COAST (1987) with Ernest Borgnine, back-toback adaptations of John Norman's timetraveling action thrillers GOR (1988) and OUTLAW OF GOR (1989) with Reed and Palance, THE MUMMY LIVES (1993) with Tony Curtis, a third remake of TEN LITTLE INDIANS with Pleasence and Brenda Vaccaro, and the loosely-knit Poe adaptations THE HOUSE OF USHER (1988) with Reed and Pleasence, THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (1990) with Lom, and BURIED ALIVE (1990) with Vaughn and Carradine. In recent years, Towers' name has even been attached to such milked-dry sequels as HOWLING IV: THE ORIGINAL NIGHT-MARE (1988), DELTA FORCE 3: THE KILLING GAME (1991), and AMERICAN NINJA 3: BLOOD HUNT (1993)

Towers' more intriguing credits over the past two decades have included EDGE OF SANITY (1989), a Stevenson adaptation in which Anthony Perkins plays Dr. Jekyll, whose Mr. Hyde alter ego turns out to be the prostitute-slaying Jack the Ripper. Reuniting with Lee, Towers restored the actor to the role of supersleuth Sherlock Holmes (with Patrick Macnee at his side as stalwart Dr. Watson) in a pleasing pair of television





miniseries, SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE LEADING LADY (1990) and INCIDENT AT VICTORIA FALLS (1991). Just before JURASSIC PARK, Towers hastily produced a bottom-of-the-barrel version of Arthur Conan Doyle's dinosaur adventure THE LOST WORLD (1992), starring John Rhys-Davies (as the intrepid Professor Challenger) and David Warner. The



"I became curious as to whether Selznick owned the rights to the character name Harry Lime, or simply to the title THE THIRD MAN. It turned out that Graham Greene had retained the rights to the character, so I signed the deal with him. Then I checked on the rights to that very famous theme, that familiar zither music by Anton Karas, and found out I could secure those rights as well. Needless to say, Selznick was furious."

film was followed that same year by a sequel, RETURN TO THE LOST WORLD. Towers closed out the decade with another TREASURE ISLAND remake, with Palance stepping into the peg leg of Stevenson's snarling pirate.

Working on more modern material, Towers has teamed in recent years with horror director Tobe Hooper and famed NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET villain Robert Englund for NIGHT TERRORS (1993) and a screen adaptation of Stephen King's THE MANGLER (1995). Towers also produced a Faustian 1989 remake of Gaston Leroux's THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, featuring slasher star Englund in the title role. Towers was one of the producers of the apartheid drama CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY (1995), with Richard Harris and James Earl Jones. He also wrote and produced the warmly received family film OWD BOB (1997), featuring James Cromwell. Towers helped orchestrate Michael Caine's return to his role as former British Secret Service agent Harry Palmer in recent screen versions of the Len Deighton spy thrillers MIDNIGHT IN ST. PE-TERSBURG and BULLET TO BEIJING (both 1995).

Towers now divides his time between homes in London, England, and Toronto, Canada, where he lives with his wife and frequent collaborator, actress and producer Maria Rohm (who played memo-rable leading roles in such Towers-pro-duced films as THE FACE OF EVE, 99

WOMEN,

COUNT DRACULA, DORIAN GRAY, BLACK BEAUTY, and CALL OF THE WILD). During a brief break from his ever-intensive workload, Towers discussed past highlights as well as future prospects connected with his long-lasting, far-reaching, and wide-ranging career in radio, television, and film

Scarlet Street: You were a popular child actor in London, but you made your first great claim to fame as a writer and producer of radio shows. When you shifted from acting to writing and producing for radio, what was the secret of your sudden success in such a competitive medium? Harry Alan Towers: Well, I started writ-

ing in the thirties, and I worked as a radio writer while I was serving in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. I was later appointed the head of the Overseas Broadcasting Service, the British equivalent of America's Armed Forces Radio Service. In those days, the BBC had a monopoly on radio in England. The commercial programming was all centered on the Continent. When the war ended, I kept on writing and eventually decided to establish my own independent radio production company. I called it Towers of London, and the company quickly developed into an international organization. We had offices in London, New York, Toronto, Sydney, and Johannesburg. SS: So the war helped start your career.

You quickly got some big names to work

for you, too.

HT: I persuaded Noel Coward to do his own half-hour radio show, THE NOEL COWARD SHOW. He had resisted radio for years, so that was a major breakthrough for me. It was also an important step in drawing some of the bigger names in British entertainment into radio. I did THEATRE ROYAL with Laurence Olivier, HORATIO HORN-BLOWER with Michael Redgrave, THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL with Marius Goring, LONDON PLAYHOUSE with James Mason. We also produced THE GRACIE FIELDS SHOW, which was extremely popular. Radio turned out to be a very good place for me in the 1950s. The networks were trying to get big-name stars at a reasonable price, and that's precisely the service that I was able to provide. Ralph Richardson was working for me at one time, and John Mills and Alec Guinness. Later on we brought Orson Welles in from America. Those programs we produced were broadcast throughout the English-speaking world. They were translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish and many other languages. In America, I was the only independent producer who was supplying program-ming to all of the major networks—ABC, CBS, NBC and Mutual. That was a wonderful time to be working in radio, when it was more than just music and news. It was a marvelous time in my life.

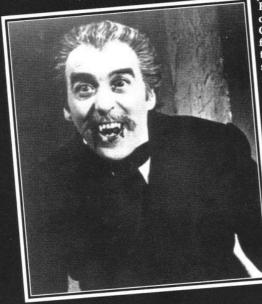
SS: Were you still developing radio scripts for Towers of London when you began us-ing your pseudonym, Peter Welbeck?

HT: We were producing a great many programs during that time, and I was writing and producing virtually all of them. Each show would end with, "This program was devised and written by Harry Alan Towers." It became a running joke with some of the radio comics. It was a bit ridiculous. That's when I decided to select a nom-de-plume, Peter Welbeck. From that point on, most of my production credits have listed me by my own name, Harry Alan Towers, while most of my stories and scripts have been credited to Peter Welbeck. It was purely

a practical decision on my part.
SS: Once Towers of London had established its reputation as a driving force in radio, you embarked on a long-standing collaboration with American actor, writer, and director Orson Welles. It was a dramatic return for the Boy Wonder who had pioneered radio drama in the United States during the thirties and forties with THE WAR OF THE WORLDS and his other legendary MERCURY THEATRE broadcasts. HT: I brought Orson over to do a radio series, a crime drama called THE BLACK MUSEUM. It was based on SECRETS OF SCOTLAND YARD, an earlier series that was done with Clive Brook, an actor who was quite well known for playing Sher-lock Holmes. Well, Orson had just created quite a sensation on screen, playing Harry Lime in THE THIRD MAN for director Carol Reed and producers Alex-ander Korda and David O. Selznick. I wondered if a radio show could be built around this intriguing, morally slippery character of Harry Lime. He's only on screen for a few minutes, but he's the character everybody remembers.

SS: However did you manage to get the rights from Selznick? He was a notoriously clever dealmaker.

HT: The story of THE THIRD MAN, of course, was written by Graham Greene.







PAGE 42: Christopher Lee played a properly mustachioed Vampire King in the Towers production of COUNT DRACULA (1970), directed by Jess Franco. LEFT: Ethan Erickson (pictured with Bronwen Booth) is the latest incarnation of the ever-youthful Mr. Gray, better known as DORIAN (2002). CENTER: As Dorian Gray, Erickson (pictured with Victoria Sanchez) learns that there's a bloody price to pay for prettiness. RIGHT: Helmut Berger was Harry Alan Towers' first DORIAN (1970), a film that hardly stretched the costume budget, since he was hardly costumed.

Well, I became curious as to whether Selznick owned the rights to the character name Harry Lime, or simply to the title THE THIRD MAN. It turned out that Graham Greene had retained the rights to the character, so I signed the deal with him. Then I checked on the rights to that very famous theme, that familiar zither music by Anton Karas, and found out I could secure those rights as well. Needless to say, Selznick was furious.

SS: You had the name, the music, and the star all wrapped up.

HT: Orson had recently received scathing notices for his stage production of OTHELLO, so he was in a foul humor. He wasn't very receptive to the idea. Since Harry Lime had been killed in the film, he wanted to know how we could possibly revive the character and build a radio show around him. So I told Orson, "We start off with the zither theme, which everybody will recognize, and then we hear a shot that brings the music to a halt. Then you say, 'That was the shot that killed Harry Lime. He died in the sewers beneath Vienna. But before he died, he lived many lives. How do I know? I know because my name is Harry Lime.' Then, with that established, we can take Harry Lime anywhere we want him to go. From that point on, Orson was hooked. We did 52 episodes of THE AD-VENTURES OF HARRY LIME. It was later syndicated as THE MANY LIVES OF HARRY LIME.

SS: One of the most popular programs you produced for radio was THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. That particular series cast two of the greatest living Shakespearean actors of the century in the roles of Arthur Conan Doyle's beloved crime-fiction creations. Sir John Gielgud portrayed the brilliant consulting detective, while Gielgud's longtime friend and favorite costar, Sir Ralph Richardson, played Holmes' devoted companion and associate, Dr. Watson.

HT: They were sweet, delightful men, and two of the finest actors in the world.

We had wonderful lunches together, with wonderful camaraderie together. They loved doing radio because, unlike the stage or screen, actors didn't have to learn their lines or wear makeup. You just go in, record the program, and pick up the check. We did 13 of those half-hour Holmes dramas, I think, and both John and Ralph were marvelous from start to finish.

SS: You finished with the famous story in which Sherlock Holmes supposedly dies. HT: For that last one we did, THE FINAL

HT: For that last one we did, THÉ FINAL PROBLEM, I brought in Orson to play Professor Moriarty for me. Moriarty was Holmes' arch-enemy, and THE FINAL PROBLEM ends with the two of them locked in a death struggle, plunging to their apparent deaths off the Reichenbach Falls. Orson had played Holmes on his MERCURY THEATRE show years earlier, but I thought it would be fun to have him play Moriarty and to set him up against Gielgud and Richardson.

SS: It must have been absolutely incredible to have three such outstanding actors working together:

HT: Orson arrived on the boat train at Victoria Station and came in for rehearsal to meet the other two and run through the lines. Now, Richardson was meticulous about marking his script. He always underlined his cue lines in red and then underlined his own lines in blue. Orson, always the diplomat, saw Ralph doing this at rehearsal and did exactly the same thing. Well, Gielgud and Richardson had never met Orson, so the four of us had this stupendous lunch together after rehearsal. I'll never forget it. Then we recorded the program, and it couldn't have been better. When we finished, Orson departed in the night to catch the boat train. Ralph always had this quality of wonderful innocence. After Orson left, he said, "I don't understand all of those horrible things that are being said about him. He seems like such a nice young man."

SS: In addition to the series of SHER-LOCK HOLMES programs, you produced a



pair of television films some 10 years ago with Christopher Lee and Patrick Macnee portraying Holmes and Watson in their twilight years.

HT: We called it THE GOLDEN YEARS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. There were two stories, each running four hours in one-hour episodes. The plan was to involve Holmes with famous people who really lived, and indeed in one story he met Theodore Roosevelt.

SS: Now you're developing a new Holmes film, using new actors and a slightly different approach.

HT: I'm planning a new film that will star Malcolm McDowell as Holmes. It will be the first film to center on the Baker Street Irregulars, the gang of street urchins who became Holmes' secret weapon on the streets of London. I haven't cast a Watson yet, though I'd very much like to use Edward Hardwicke if he is interested and available. He's the son of Sir Cedric Hardwicke, who played Holmes on radio. Edward played Watson for the Granada series with Jeremy Brett, and he was absolutely marvelous. He recently played Holly in our new version of SHÉ that we just shot in Bulgaria. He's a nice guy, and we got along quite well. I'd love to see him play Dr. Watson again. We're calling the new film THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS.

SS: Your film career first began to prosper in the mid-sixties with the box-office success of your first Fu Manchu film, THE FACE OF FU MANCHU. When you began making these films, you secured the rights to all of the original Sax Rohmer novels, yet none of the five films you wrote and produced between 1964 and 1969 were based on those books.

HT: No, they were all originals. We never dramatized Rohmer's novels. A few structural elements and characters

Che/Return of the
HORROR

Etiristopher Lee

interviewed by David Del Valle



PAGE 44: Horror legend Christopher Lee strikes a commanding pose in what will forever remain his most famous characterization—Count Dracula, the King of the Vampires. ABOVE: Giving the Count some stiff competition in the villain department is Saruman in THE LORD OF THE RINGS (2001), created some 43 years after Lee first played Dracula. Here, we see the evil wizard taking time out on a fishing holiday.

"If the money's there and the part's there, I'm there—and I deliver."

—Christopher Lee

first met Christopher Lee in London at one of the John Player Lectures given in his honor by the National Film during the summer of 1971. Lee had 14 films on offer at that time and was working nonstop in several countries. He had only recently formed Charlemagne Productions to produce films with Hammer alumnus Anthony Nelson Keys. Little did I know that by the end of that decade we would both be living in Los Angeles, communicating with regularity on the phone, and even lunching now and then at that infamous celebrity eatery Ma Maison (under the watchful eye of dining regular Orson Welles himself).

By 1978, I was a theatrical agent in Century City. Among my clients was Barbara Steele, and I often asked Lee's advice on how to break the type casting that then shadowed her career. I did not always have the forethought to tape my conversations with Lee, and many great anecdotes remain in my memory and nowhere else. However, by the early eighties I was working for John Russell Taylor's Films and Filming magazine, and my friendship with Lee made him an obvious choice for an interview. Lee had recently completed THE HOWLING II (1984). His fellow horror stars, Peter Cushing, Vincent Price, and John Carradine, were still living. Lee's remarkable renaissance (not comeback, since he was never really away) in SLEEPY HOL-

LOW (2000), THE LORD OF THE RINGS (2001, with sequels already filmed), and STAR WARS: ATTACK OF THE CLONES (2002) was still years in the future. The following chat was taped over the course of two meetings—the first at his condominium the Wilshire Holmby in Westwood and the second in a Westwood motel as Lee prepared to return to the United Kingdom for good. The interview has never been printed in its entirety until this issue of *Scarlet Street*

Scarlet Street: What led you to make THE HOWLING II when you said you would never make a horror film again unless it was a good project. Do you think this was a good project? Christopher Lee: I did indeed say that, though I've been misquoted on a great many things, one of them being that I said I would never make another horror movie. I never said that, ever! What I have said was that, if I did do another one, it would have to be a good one, of the type which appealed to me. The story would have to be interesting and appealing to the public, with a part interesting to play and of a kind which I hadn't done before, the latter probably being the most important element. My decisions were all valued in regards to HOWLING II.

SS: Of course, in the past you've specifically meant you'd never play Count Dracula again. CL: The last time that I played Dracula was 1971. I've always said I'd never play him again, with one reservation. The only thing that would ever tempt me back to playing the part was if it was done exactly as Stoker wrote it. It never has been. The only thing that would tempt me was if

somebody did the book correct in every detail—otherwise no, never again! The last horror film that I did, in my opinion, was TO THE DEVIL—A DAUGHTER for Hammer, and that was in 1975.

SS: It was also the last Hammer horror film. CL: Yes. I'm not going to spend the rest of my life making horror movies. Specifically, I'm not going to spend the rest of my life playing villainous characters in horror movies, because they don't make very great demands on me, except in terms of an actor's imagination. To put over the incredible and make the audience believe it is a tremendous demand, actually, probably the biggest of all! Still, it would merely mean that I'm doing the same sort of picture, the same sort of part, and making a comfortable living year after year after year. I shall become very frustrated as an actor and very bored with what I'm doing-and eventually, of course, I'll bore the audience.

SS: You're one of the few genre actors who plays his characters without campiness or even a remote inclination to send up your material. CL: If you play with conviction and involvement, it will come over convincingly and the audience will respond in kind. It comes of having a good deal of imagination-in fact, a vivid imagination-and certain powers of inventiveness. I really do think about what I'm saying in a scene, which may sound simplistic, but an awful lot of people in my profession don't. They don't listen to what the other person is saying, and I sometimes wonder if they listen to what they're saying. (Laughs) If you really do think about what you're saying, the eye

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SS: Vincent Price has a tendency not to want to, though, right?

CL: Well, that's because some of the pictures he's done over the years really call for it. Let's make no mistake about it-Vincent is a very fine actor and a very skillful actor. He's truly superb in playing comedy and playing straight and just about anything he touches. I'm devoted to him. I'm devoted to Peter, too; I don't have to tell you how enormously so, and I'm devoted to John Carradine. The sort of pictures that Vincent was in over that period, the Corman period, didn't require that the part be played totally straight. They were black comedy, at times hilarious comedy, and he played them that way. Deliberately!

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SS: What persuaded you to appear in THE HOWLING II?

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SS: So you were attracted by werewolves? CL: I had no intention whatsoever of playing one, God forbid! (Laughs) I saw the torments that poor Ferdy Mayne went through! I was right there while he was in a room in this Jewish cemetery outside Prague, going through the makeup process. He was wonderfully patient, but I myself wouldn't have been.



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SS: Well, we do see your backside in that one. if memory serves.

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SS: A Christopher Lee nude scene!

CL: A long way off! A long way off! But the difference between the horror pictures that I made and the ones they make today is precisely that we never showed too much. You know, I've always said that I didn't make all that many horror pictures. There will always be an argument about that, but I reserve the right to stick to my own opinions. I don't consider the Fu Manchu films to be horror films, for example. They're melodramas. SS: What sort of film do you consider HOUSE OF LONG SHADOWS?

CL: That most certainly isn't a horror film; it's a black comedy.



SS: It's an old dark house film.

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SS: Well, it was made by Cannon Films, and their films rarely seem to get released. There are so few great practitioners of horror still

working, are there?

CL: There certainly aren't many directors of the first rank who make horror films these days. If you go back in history, you'll find the great, great ones, such as Tod Browning, James Whale, Jacques Tourneur, F. W. Murnau, Val Lewton-he was a producer, needless to say, but very much in control of his films. You also come to Alfred Hitchcock, who was the greatest master of them all in terms of suggestion. He used shock sparingly-but when he did, God, it was effective! Then, of course, there's Terence Fisher and many of the others of the Hammer period. Terry depended very much on his cast, and that is not a pejorative statement at all. I've always said that Terry was a brilliant adjuster, that we would do what we had in mind and he would then adjust it to achieve the maximum effect.

SS: Would you discuss your role with Fisher

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SS: Do you ever make exceptions to this rule? CL: Yes, if I'm playing either a real person who existed historically or I'm playing in period. If it's a real person, you want to get the idea that you look like that person and you're behaving like that person would have behaved. If it's a period film, you want to check the overall appearance and presentation of the character. Does it fit the story or is it out of place? In those cases, I will go see the dailies on the first day. If it works, I won't go again. I don't think actors and actresses should see rushes!

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SS: Horror fans are certainly fortunate that you fought for THE DEVIL RIDES OUT.

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you're called upon to basically play yourself?

CL: I'm not sure I ever have been! (Laughs) I've come fairly close. I was fairly close to being myself in THE FAR PAVILIONS, in my opinion. Probably the closest I've been to myself-and I'm not sure I should take this as a compliment or not-but the closest I've been to myself. not in actions, but in words and general behavior, was in THE WICKER MAN.

SS: The Lord of the Manor! (Laughs)

CL: Not so much that, but my way of saying and doing things. You can't learn to act. The technique—that you must learn and adjust accordingly. Whether it's singing in an opera or doing something on the stage or in a big closeup—that technique you must learn, and then subordinate it to your own instincts.

SS: Peter Cushing, Vincent Price, John Carradine, Christopher Lee-you're the last of the horror stars

CL: Somebody wrote that I was the last of the breed, whatever that meant! (Laughs) It's not like I'm an extinct dog! It doesn't mean that there aren't actors around today who can replace us.

SS: You all have a specific persona, though. In that respect, you're irreplaceable. There won't be another Vincent Price, for instance. Years ago. Hammer tried to replace you with Ralph Bates, but it simply didn't work.

CL: Well, that's not entirely his fault. One of the reasons I may have made an impact in the Hammer days-one of the major reasons was my size. It was not that way originally. During the first 10 years of my career, they told me I was too tall, because I towered over the leading man and woman. You can't disguise that on the stage, but you can in the movies. You can just sit down, as Jack Palance did with Alan Ladd in SHANE. I don't think you ever saw them standing together. I am a tall man, and I don't have what you might call a typical face, typifying any particular nationality, any particular part of life, any particular race. Some people think I'm very British, some people think I'm not. I could be almost anything except an Oriental-and the fact that my face was different and DEVIL RIDES OUT (1968). that I'm tall was a plus when it finally came to the point where I had to put something over in terms of physical presence and with a degree of power. Certainly, that counted for much with Count Dracula, and with Baron Frankenstein's Creature and The Mummy.

SS: Would you describe yourself as a heavy? CL: In one form or another, in one historical period or another, I've played heavies. I think the word "heavy" is quite adequate, really, since I've played all the villains, real ones and unreal ones.

SS: If you were to describe yourself as a specific sort of actor

CL: I would say that I was a character actor who became a star in a certain kind of movie over a period of time. That is what brought me to the attention of the world audiences. I've never denied that, and I never will. I will always be grateful, but for the most part I've stopped doing that kind of picture and I'm still playing leading parts as a character actor. If I'm remembered for the work that I've done, I hope it will be because I was very unconventional in my performances. That returns us to what I was saving earliersurprise them! Try to be different if possible, never try to be totally one thing or the other. That became difficult when I had to play Dracula over and over again, until it got to the point where the character degenerated and I realized that it was actually doing me more harm than good. SS: Not only that, but Hammer didn't want to pay you very much.

CL: They didn't want to pay me at all! (Laughs) It wasn't only that, it was the fact that they didn't really know how to position the character in the stories, because they were inventing new stories.



Christopher Lee (along with Leon Green, TEERS, I went to Boston, Philadelphia, Sarah Lawson, and Paul Eddington) awaits Washington, Charlotte, Tampa, Cleve-I've played them, as you know. I think evil in the Hammer Horror classic THE land, Minneapolis, Seattle, and, again,

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SS: Hammer really got desperate when they updated the Dracula films to present-day London for DRACULA A.D. 1972 and THE SA-TANIC RITES OF DRACULA.

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CL: I'm not sure I ever have been! (Laughs) I've come fairly close. I was fairly close to being myself in THE FAR PAVILIONS, in my opinion. Probably the closest I've been to myself-and I'm not sure I should take this as a compliment or not-but the closest I've been to myself. not in actions, but in words and general behavior, was in THE WICKER MAN.

SS: The Lord of the Manor! (Laughs)

CL: Not so much that, but my way of saying and doing things. You can't learn to act. The technique—that you must learn and adjust accordingly. Whether it's singing in an opera or doing something on the stage or in a big closeup-that technique you must learn, and then subordinate it to your own instincts.

SS: Peter Cushing, Vincent Price, John Carradine, Christopher Lee-you're the last of

the horror stars.

CL: Somebody wrote that I was the last of the breed, whatever that meant! (Laughs) It's not like I'm an extinct dog! It doesn't mean that there aren't actors around today who can replace us.

SS: You all have a specific persona, though. In that respect, you're irreplaceable. There won't be another Vincent Price, for instance. Years ago, Hammer tried to replace you with Ralph Bates, but it simply didn't work.

CL: Well, that's not entirely his fault. One of the reasons I may have made an impact in the Hammer days—one of the major reasons was my size. It was not that way originally. During the first 10 years of my career, they told me I was too tall, because I towered over the leading man and woman. You can't disguise that on the stage, but you can in the movies. You can just sit down, as Jack Palance did with Alan Ladd in SHANE. I don't think you ever saw them standing together. I am a tall man, and I don't have what you might call a typical face, typifying any particular nationality, any particular part of life, any particular race. Some people think I'm very British, some people think I'm not. I could be almost anything except an Oriental-and I've played them, as you know. I think the fact that my face was different and that I'm tall was a plus when it finally came to the point where I had to put something over in terms of physical presence and with a degree of power. Certainly, that counted for much with Count Dracula, and with Baron Frankenstein's Creature and The Mummy

SS: Would you describe yourself as a heavy? CL: In one form or another, in one historical period or another, I've played heavies. I think the word "heavy" is quite adequate, really, since I've played all the villains, real ones and unreal ones.

SS: If you were to describe yourself as a specific sort of actor

CL: I would say that I was a character actor who became a star in a certain kind of movie over a period of time. That is what brought me to the attention of the world audiences. I've never denied that, and I never will. I will always be grateful, but for the most part I've stopped doing that kind of picture and I'm still playing leading parts as a character actor. If I'm remembered for the work that I've done, I hope it will be because I was very unconventional in my performances. That returns us to what I was saying earliersurprise them! Try to be different if possible, never try to be totally one thing or the other. That became difficult when I had to play Dracula over and over again, until it got to the point where the character degenerated and I realized that it was actually doing me more harm than good. SS: Not only that, but Hammer didn't want to pay you very much.

CL: They didn't want to pay me at all! (Laughs) It wasn't only that, it was the fact that they didn't really know how to position the character in the stories, because they were inventing new stories.



Sarah Lawson, and Paul Eddington) awaits Washington, Charlotte, Tampa, Cleveevil in the Hammer Horror classic THE land, Minneapolis, Seattle, and, again, **DEVIL RIDES OUT (1968).**

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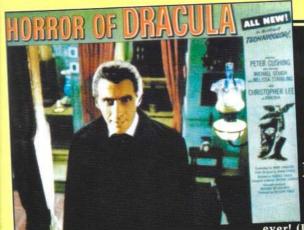
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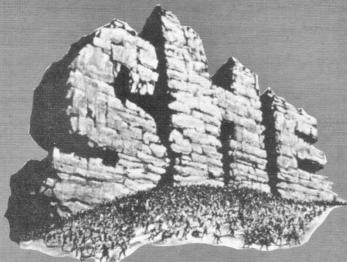
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EMPIRE OF THE **IMAGINATION**



WHO MUST BE OBEYED PART FOUR

by Lelia Loban

A fter Avi Nesher's 1982 movie spoof, Jeanne Van Cott may have intended to produce a 1996 TV series, SHE, directed by Nick Marck, with Petra Jorgensen as script supervisor. This series never happened.

During its first season, BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER's spinoff series, ANGEL, aired an episode titled, "She" (February 8, 2000). Many of the episode titles on BUFFY and ANGEL evoke well-known fiction, movies, and songs, though the teleplays are original stories. David Greenwalt and Marti Noxon wrote "She," directed by Greenwalt. Bai Ling, a former soldier in the People's Liberation Army of China, guest stars as the demon Jheira, pronounced "Sh-yee-rah"—reminiscent of the Hammer Films pronunciation of "Ayesha" (Ah-yee-shah). The regular cast includes heroic if troubled vampire Angel (David Boreanaz) and his human helpers, Cordelia Chase (Charisma Carpenter) and Wesley Wyndham-Price (Alexis Denisof).

Princess Jheira rebels against paternalistic Oden Tal, a lost civilization, hidden from mundane Earth in a parallel dimension. Fleeing from Tae (Colby French) and other avengers from the male side of this battle of the sexes, Jheira arrives in contemporary Los Angeles. A time and space portal, a vortex of swirling fire and ice that looks like the inside of Ayesha's spinning pillar of fire as Haggard describes it, brings Jheira and female refugees who follow her to a "new life" in Earth's dimension. Like Ayesha, Jheira wields technology so advanced that it seems magical.

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Tae calls Jheira "The Bringer of Chaos" and "a vesse of pure rage." With a large, sinister, black tattoo on he face, she does look vampishly villainous. When incognite

she dresses like a film noir femme fatale, swathed in a black scarf, dark glasses, and a long, black coat with a high collar. Under the coat, she dresses like a sadistic dungeon mistress, in skintight, black leather pants with a nearly-backless, black leather halter top, cropped short to bare her navel. The halter strap encircles her neck like a dog collar. A circular cutout exposes plenty of cleavage.

The male demons call Jheira "the traitor It." With a manly tool—a big, nasty, metal hook with a clamp—the men of Oden Tal fix any rebellious female they can catch, by prying a raised ridge (the Ko, similar to Haggard's name for the hidden city, Kor) out of her upper spine. The Ko, Jheira tells Angel, is the locus of a woman's personality and sexual power. Removing the Ko, a form of sexual mutilation, allows the men to control the women. Fixed females refer to themselves as "It" and become drab, stupid, mutration, allows the men to control the women. Fixed fe-males refer to themselves as "It" and become drab, stupid, and obedient. Jheira helps other escaped, intact females hide out in a spa, where they lounge in hot tubs filled with ice to keep from literally burning up as they adapt to Earth's atmosphere. The architecture and decoration of different rooms of the spa suggest ancient cultures: Egypt, Greece and Rome Greece and Rome.

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The rebel feminist scenario sends a mixed message since these freedom fighters dress like sex objects. Jheira calls the hot chicks on ice "my girls." They're not tough grrlz and this isn't real feminism. It's an adolescent het erosexual male fantasy. Jheira's hot, too, and, like the original Ayesha, she inspires uncontrollable lust in men nt het-







PAGE 50: Ursula Andress was pretty hot stuff in the 1965 Hammer Films production of SHE, costarring Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. LEFT: In the latest SHE (2002), produced by Harry Alan Towers, Michael Vincey (Christoph Waltz) makes his way to a friend's home with son Leo in tow. RIGHT: Michael Holly dies after entrusting his young son to the care of Ludwig Holly (Edward Hardwicke.)

Breathing heavily, she moans about "the heat under my skin." A glow surrounds her hands when she touches Angel. As she turns away from him, he watches lecherously as her exposed spinal ridge lights up red. Jheira's touch can kill, causing a person to spontaneously combust from the inside, similar to the way Haggard's Ayesha kills Ustane by touching her. Only the strong, cold vampire can withstand her. Jheira, though less self-absorbed and more altruistic than Ayesha, behaves just as ruthlessly. Without apology, she considers her human helpers expendable. She tells Angel, "I don't need an extra conscience. I'll do what I think is right." Angel's investigative agency sides with the female demons against the male demons in a chop-sockey fight to the death.

Most of the teleplays for ANGEL involve fairly complex relationships between characters, but in this simplistic story, action galore substitutes for plot resolution and character development. Biff! Pow! Since Angel's a vampire, a certain amount of sadomasochism comes with the territory, but most episodes temper the cruelty with humor. This episode is an exception. Instead of wearing her slinky wardrobe with the impudence of a Catwoman, a Mrs. Peel, or, for that matter, BUFFY and ANGEL's Drusilla (Juliet Landau), Jheira comes across as a grimly hostile dominatrix. Originally, series originator Joss Whedon described Jheira to the press as a recurring character, possibly a love interest for Angel. Overwhelmingly negative fan reaction seems to have banished her back through the hyperspace portal, at least for now, since Jheira's never returned.

Still awaiting release is a new version of SHE from prolific producer Harry Alan Towers. Filmed on location in Bulgaria, SHE is a joint production of Towers of London of the United Kingdom, Italian International Film of Italy, and Boyana Film Company of Bulgaria. Prophecy Entertainment of Canada (with many of the same personnel as Towers of London), originally credited as the production company, premiered SHE in February, 2001, at AFMA's American Film Market in Santa Monica, California. However, Prophecy is not listed in the screen credits. Peter Jobin and Harry Alan Towers (pseudonymously, as Peter Welbeck) wrote the screenplay, directed by Timothy Bond. Bond's movie credits include DEADLY HARVEST (1977), THE LOST WORLD and RETURN TO THE LOST WORLD

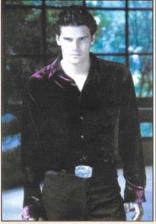
(both 1992), though he's much better known as a director of series television (ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, HERCULES, ANIMORPHS, and GOOSEBUMPS, among many others).

Early production notes, including the "Debuting Product" list in *The Hollywood Reporter*'s preview of the 2001 Cannes Festival, written when SHE was still in preproduction, named Luke Perry as the star. However, Perry is not in the movie.

Stelvio Cipriani's classical music score upgrades the film's low-budget atmosphere. Cipriani composes in a style that's recognizably derivative of Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakoff. Many of Cipriani's melodies for SHE are Rimsky pastiches, slight variations on melodies from "Scheherezade." The money-saving synthesizer simulation of an orchestra sounds reasonably good, most of the time.

This SHE follows the basic outline of Haggard's plot, but alters the setting and some of the characters, while eliminating nearly all of Haggard's serious philosophical discussions. The movie opens on a dark and stormy night in Victorian England, as Michael Vincey (Austrian actor Christoph Waltz), carrying a box, runs down a wooded lane with his five-year-old son, Leo (played by an uncredited actor). In the earliest and one of the most obvious of the many little production goofs, the shadow of someone in the camera crew moves against a tree trunk, after Michael and Leo run past. (Most scenes look underrehearsed or poorly timed or both. Sometimes the viewer can spot actors breaking character to look offstage for cues.)

Father and son find the rooms of Ludwig Holly in the Cambridge University Department of Ancient Languages, where Michael asks Holly to become Leo's guardian—an interesting choice, since scary, surrealist paintings of ghosts and demonic men on Holly's walls mark him as an unusual man. Edward Hardwicke, the production's best actor, plays Holly. Hardwicke's credits cover half a century. Of course he's best known to *Scarlet Street* readers for his excellent Dr. Watson, opposite Jeremy Brett's Great Detective, for Granada TV's SHERLOCK HOLMES series. Unfortunately, SHE doesn't take full advantage of Hardwicke, whose intelligent, dignified Holly remains secondary to Leo. Mostly, Holly passes judgment on the action in Greek chorus style, or warns Leo to be cautious. The production and editing problems are so pervasive that even the ex-





LEFT: Buffy the Vampire Slaver's undead boyfriend (David Boreanaz) had a run-in with a variation of H. Rider Haggard's immortal Ayesha on a first-season episode of ANGEL, a BUFFY spinoff. RIGHT: As Ayesha in the new SHE, Ophlie Winter rules over the lost city of Kor with a gentle touch and an iron will.

perienced, thoroughly professional Hardwicke sometimes gives awkward line readings that a director with a bigger budget probably would have reshot.

Echoes of previous SHEs find their way into this production. The scene of Michael on his deathbed is intercut with scenes of She (Ophèlie Winter) bathing in blue flames, as Ursula Andress does in the 1965 Hammer Film. Her robed, hooded worshippers chant, "She, She, She, She, She," just as in the 1982 version with Sandahl Bergman, except without the davening.

Twenty years after his archaeologist father's death, Leo, now played by Ian Duncan, comes of age. Though inexperienced, with only one previous feature film role (in 1999, as John in JESUS), Ian Duncan shows promise. His line readings need improvement, but he's attractive and athletic, with good screen presence. His Leo, unlike the passive male bimbo of some other film versions, initiates the action throughout.

Returning from a trip to America, Leo claims his birthright. Michael Vincey, an archaeologist who traced the path of Alexander the Great through Central Asia, has left Leo a lot of money and a "cursed" box that Holly was supposed to destroy, but didn't. Inside it, Leo and Holly find another box, holding a golden coffer that's "late Egyptian, around the time of Alexander the Great," Holly says. Its contents include a hand-drawn map, a pottery shard ("Macedonian Greek"), and a translation of the shard: 'Some wild story about a lost land ruled by a woman, She Who Must Be Obeyed," Holly reports. The box also contains an enormous Egyptian ring, set with a turquoise stone scarab that opens, to reveal a portrait miniature of "Kallikrates, High Priest of the Temple of Isis." (Turquoise and scarabs are both symbols of long life and good health.) Kallikrates looks like Leo.

Leo dreams of the coffin of Kallikrates, She in the blue flame, and the chanting of her worshippers. Awakening, calling for her, Leo sees a vision of Ayesha in his bedroom-vet another echo of the 1965 Hammer version. The young romantic decides to follow the map "and see where it leads." Holly and Job (David Ross) accompany him. (Ross hams it up as Job, a comical coward preoccupied with his personal grooming, who jeopardizes the expedition to Kor by lugging along fancy china and glassware in bulky hampers. He says, "An English gentleman never travels light.")

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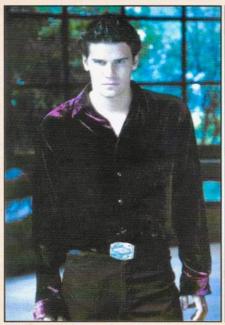
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LEFT: Buffy the Vampire Slayer's undead boyfriend (David Boreanaz) had a run-in with a variation of H. Rider Haggard's immortal Ayesha on a first-season episode of ANGEL, a BUFFY spinoff. RIGHT: As Ayesha in the new SHE, Ophlie Winter rules over the lost city of Kor with a gentle touch and an iron will.

perienced, thoroughly professional Hardwicke sometimes gives awkward line readings that a director with a bigger

budget probably would have reshot.

Echoes of previous SHEs find their way into this production. The scene of Michael on his deathbed is intercut with scenes of She (Ophèlie Winter) bathing in blue flames, as Ursula Andress does in the 1965 Hammer Film. Her robed, hooded worshippers chant, "She, She, She, She, She," just as in the 1982 version with Sandahl Bergman, except without the davening.

Twenty years after his archaeologist father's death, Leo, now played by Ian Duncan, comes of age. Though inexperienced, with only one previous feature film role (in 1999, as John in JESUS), Ian Duncan shows promise. His line readings need improvement, but he's attractive and athletic, with good screen presence. His Leo, unlike the passive male bimbo of some other film versions, initiates the ac-

tion throughout.

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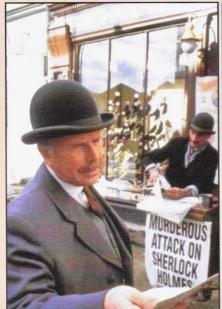
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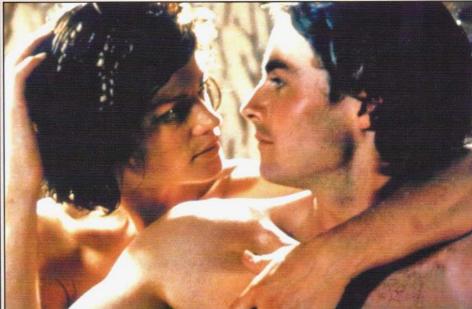
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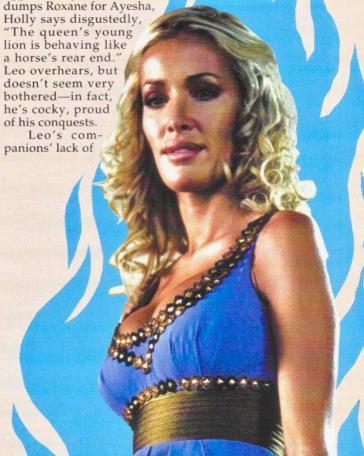
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Leo (Ian Duncan) stradles a hot box as he tries to save Roxane (Marie Bumer) from a fiery doom.

interest in women becomes a source of comic relief. At a feast, a chubby, older woman threatens to come kiss and claim Holly. Alarmed, he fends her off. Fussbudget Job, looking more like a gay stereotype every minute, remarks primly that nobody'd better kiss him, since he's a confirmed bachelor.

On the journey to Kor, black-robed, hooded spies shadow the travellers and sometimes fire a few arrows. Ustane underestimates the Dark Ones as "poor simple people—fools," until their leader, Tala (Jennifer Podemski), challenges Leo to drink to "the power of the Dark God" and provokes a knockdown, drag-out with Roxane. (Sinister-looking Podemski performs her own martial arts stunts in full frame, fighting mainly by kicking.) Soon after Roxane beats Tala and gloats insultingly, the Dark Ones try to give the travellers the "hot skull" treatment, similar to Haggard's "hot pot" ritual, leading to general mayhem in which Leo falls gravely wounded. Ustane's soldiers carry him, half dead, to Kor.

At the city gates, a herald with a huge copper shofar-like horn signals the travellers' arrival. The hell with the minimalist budget: for the sound of this formidable horn, the production should have ditched Cipriani's synthesizer and hired someone to blow a real bass alpenhorn, or a tuba, or even a bass trombone! The synthesizer's phony bleat signals worse to come, as the action moves into the cheap-looking palace sets, where Ayesha heals Leo. The lava pit in the throne room is quite nice, though. It almost sounds alive, with a grunting, roaring belch when victims tumble into it.

With the advent of the Kor scenes, the production's weakest actor takes center stage. Ophèlie Winter (born in France, the daughter of Dutch singer David Winter) is a beautiful young woman, with a fine, fit body. (She wears a body stocking for her nude scenes, unlike Ian Duncan, who takes it all off.) Unfortunately, her Ayesha lacks depth, with no menacing or formidable presence, much less any suggestion of an ancient soul. Heavy makeup and bleached platinum hair with conspicuous dark roots, in contemporary styles that belong on Britney Spears, sabotage Win-

ter's naturally dark, exotic beauty. Here, she looks like a Valley Girl—and she carries herself like a runway model. Everything about her screams "modern." It doesn't help that the looped soundtrack voice, a lovely low contralto with a slight accent, reads Ayesha's lines woodenly.

Gotz Otto easily upstages Winter as the Chamberlain, Attila, Ayesha's sadistic enforcer. (He replaces Haggard's Billali.) Attila is dressed entirely in black, with a black cloak and black arm-guards studded with silver metal. (He's the only black-clad person in Kor except for the Dark Ones; the other inhabitants wear mostly muted beige, pink, and pale yellow, like the Eloi of 1960's THE TIME MACHINE.) Like nearly all of the characters, Attila wears a distractingly modern hairstyle, and he moves in a way that looks modern and biker-gang urban. An appropriately snide baritone voice speaks the German actor's lines on the soundtrack, but with an American accent that sounds out of place. Still, he's tall and powerful, with screen presence and a nasty sneer.

Otto looks terrific in the fight scenes, though production problems turn up even in these well-staged scenes. During a violent, athletic sword fight between Leo and Attila, Ian Duncan wears a long, toga-like affair, tied at one shoulder, with the other shoulder bare. This dress looks so silly, billowing up around his bare thighs when he jumps off a wall, that it breaks the mood of the scene. Ophèlie Winter has her own costume troubles when Ayesha condemns the Dark Ones to the lava pit, as She stalks down the throne-room stairs to the tune of barbaric drumming. Winter undercuts the dramatic moment with her too obvious awareness of how her long, heliotrope gown moves and whether the skirt opens too high to her crotch in front. She even breaks character to adjust the dress! (Like so many other scenes, this one needed another take.)

The Dark Ones moan and cringe, until She orders them released from bondage and puts a psychic whammy on them, so that they enter a trance and willingly jump into the lava pit to their deaths. The citizens cheer. Obviously, the Dark Ones are a hated minority group. They look enough like Muslims to make a viewer wonder whether the filmmakers really thought out the implications of all this, though clearly nobody could have predicted the terrorist atrocity about to happen in New York and Washington.

As the executions proceed, Holly says sadly, "Poor devils," but Roxane points out, "They tried to kill us," and Job agrees implacably: "I say, fry 'em up." Like Ustane in other versions, Roxane risks her life in her devotion to Leo, though love never makes her stupid. She complains, "The queen has stolen your mind as well as your heart." Ayesha almost gets Leo's body, too, in an interesting twist on the pillar of fire scene. Destroying the ancient corpse of Kallikrates unexpectedly liberates his ghost, who interferes with her plan to take Leo into the flame with her. The movie leaves unanswered the question of whether Kallikrates causes her destruction out of jealousy, because She's upgrading him to the latest version, or whether, as Holly speculates, entering the flame one more time is "more than her flesh could bear." Roxane and an earthquake rescue the travellers from vengeful Attilla, though not in time to save Holly from misquoting HAMLET (while Leo, of all people, quotes HAMLET correctly). As the escaping survivors gaze back at the smoking hole in the ground that was Kor, Leo invites Roxane to return to England with him, but she's got better sense.

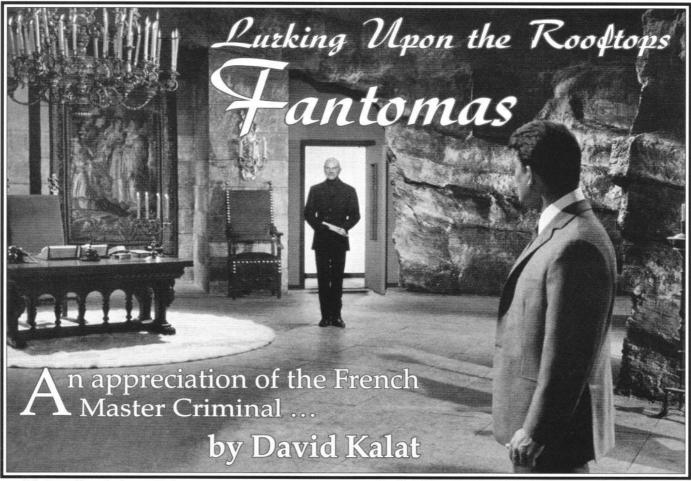
H. Rider Haggard's friend, Sir Walter Besant, wrote to him in 1887, "Whatever else you do, you will have 'She' always behind you for purposes of odious comparison. And whatever critics say the book is bound to be a magnificent success." (H. Rider Haggard, The Days of My Life: An Autobiography, Longmans, Green & Co., 1926.) Besant was right! The popularity of She as a subject for literature and moving pictures shows no signs of fading. As society changes,

She evolves. What's next?









His boundless shadow extends Over Paris and distant coasts. What then is this gray-eyed ghost Whose silence surges within? Might it be you, Fantômas, Lurking upon the rooftops?

—Robert Desnos, The Lament of Fantômas (1933)

he dawn of the 20th century was an audacious time of dread. The repressive morality of the Victorian era was succumbing to a new age of freedom and permissiveness. The industrial revolution inaugurated a new emphasis on cities, leaving numberless masses dislocated, their worth as human beings now measured in economic terms. The technology of war advanced faster than the diplomacy needed to keep that technology safely in disuse. The new century would not yet come of age before the entire world would be plunged into the abyss: the First World War would bring the old world of the 1800s into fatal collision with the modern world of the 1900s.

But what does all this have to do with the movies, you ask?

"Fantômas! . . . Slowly, sitting alone is a darkling room, when the fire is dying and the night falling, first locking and double-locking your door, utter those three syllables! They evoke a sense of mystery; they recall the memory to a nightmare that endured for months, for years, that obsessed the whole world!

Fantômas!... That fellow was nowhere and everywhere at one and the same moment. Nothing was secure from his enterprise; nothing could be safeguarded against his rapacity. He mocked at the strongest safes, the most elaborate precautions but moved his mirth. He was the "Robber" of the story-

books, the redoubtable master of men's lives and fortunes . . ."

—Marcel Allain, The Lord of Terror (1925)

The classical narrative model of motion-picture screenwriting has its roots in 19th-century French "restoration" dramas: this is the genesis of the three-act structure so slavishly worshipped by Hollywood. Restoration plays built their drama around some violation of bourgeois values, some transgression of the social code. Repressed Victorian audiences, living in a ruthlessly conformist culture, could vicariously experience taboos without guilt, because in the final act the social code would be restored (hence the term), the transgressors punished, the values system reaffirmed.

By the turn of the century, this model no longer was adequate. The world was changing in ways that showed the failings of the old bourgeois values. A new form of drama evolved in contrast to Restoration: Decadence. Whereas restoration plays were respectable mainstream fare, decadent works were subversive and subcultural—not plays (they were too high profile), but pulp fiction, the better to evade detection from the self-righteous watchdogs. Decadent literature deliberately challenged the social order. Transgressors were not punished, crime did pay.

"Fantômas."

"What did you say?"

"I said: Fantômas.

"And what does that mean?"

"Nothing-everything!"

"But what is it?"

"No one—and yet, yes, it is someone!"

"And what does this someone do?"

"Spreads terror!"

—Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain, Fantômas (1911) An evocative description to be sure, but unhelpful. For

the uninitiated then, a primer:

Fantômas is a fictional super-criminal created by novelists Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain in the early 20th century as part of a blossoming pulp literary trend that sired such fiends as Fu Manchu, Professor Moriarty, Maldoror, and Dr. Mabuse.

A master of disguise and a fiendishly clever outlaw, it is not for nothing that Fantômas is known as the Genius of Crime and the Lord of Terror. The audacity of his crimes, coupled with his ability to consistently evade capture, leads many to suspect that Fantômas does not really exist, that he is just a myth.

Detective Juve would beg to differ. He and his associate, Fandor, intrepid reporter for La Capitale, are thoroughly obsessed with apprehending Fantômas and bring-

ing him to justice. Displaying a flair for disguise and a dogged persistence not unlike their quarry, Juve and Fandor remain one step-but never more than one step—behind the Lord of Terror.

Indelible images abound: Fantômas hangs one of his criminal accomplices upside down in a church bell, so that when the carillon is rung at Mass the poor thief's blood rains down on the parishioners as his body smashes against the sides of the bell.

Or another prime moment of Fantomania: a workman comes to an apartment building. He taps his hammer gently against the pasteboard wall, and the plaster flakes away easily. Suddenly, human blood begins to gush from the "wound" in the wall.

Or my personal favorite: Juve and Fandor have at last arrested Fantômas. As they lead him away to jail, he suddenly—how?—races off in the opposite direction. Juve and Fandor are left stunned, still futilely gripping his disembodied arms. Did he shed body parts the way a lizard lets go of its tail? On closer inspection our heroes discover all they have "arrested" is a limbs.

scene in Fantômas isn't the city of Paris.

struggle with the boa constrictor and the latter's death-pangs, nor the gunfight among the wine barrels nor the masked criminal slipping into a cistern, but simply that in which a policeman is expertly unscrewing the grill of a ventilator duct, holding on to the fastened side of the plaque and experiencing from time to time the resistance of the screws, then carefully placing them beside the piece of metal once it has been fully removed. In this marvelous poetic anthology, each of us at our disposal beforehand an image that is destined to thrill us. And for each of us it never be the same one."

-Francis Lacassin

Our story begins: A young man named Marcel Allain needed a job. So he approached a certain Pierre Souvestre and applied for a position as the man's secretary. Souvestre had recently given up his law practice to pursue, naturally, automotive journalism. To secure the post, Allain cranked

out an impromptu article praising the merits of some new kind of truck he knew nothing about. And so it came to pass that, in a short span of time, Allain and Souvestre were partners in crime, so to speak, cowriting serialized detective thrillers. Got that?

Well, it came to pass that an advertiser pulled out of one of their auto rags at the last minute, so to fill the blank pages they hammered out a serial called Le Rour (1909). It was a hit, so they then turned out a parody of it (!) called *Le Four* (slang for "the failure"). That parody caught the eye of an influential publisher . .

Enter Arthème Fayard. His fame and fortune had come from reprinting 19th-century novels in extraordinarily cheap editions, with eve-catching covers painted by house artist Gino Starace. Allain and Souvestre created Fantômas for a series of books for Fayard, which the pair

were obligated to write at a blind-

ing pace.

To generate such a prodigious output, they approached the task of writing as an assembly-line affair. Allain and Souvestre split the books evenly down the middle, each author penning alternate chapters. If you can get your hands on one of the original French language copies, you can easily decipher which of the two wrote each chapter. If the word "néanmoins" ("nevertheless") appears on the first page of a chapter, that's Souvestre's chapter; if "toutefois" (also "nevertheless") appears on that first page, then the chapter was written by Allain.

From February 1911 onward for 32 consecutive months, Fayard published the adventures of Fantômas with clockwork regularity. Each novel was adorned with a suitably lurid cover by Gino Starace, each one a bestseller anxiously awaited by a hungry public. When all was said and done, Fayard had printed over five million books from Fantômas through to La Fin de Fantômas (1913, "The End of Fantômas.")

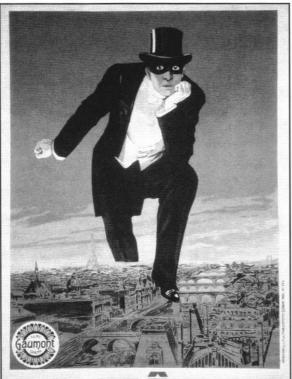
The end of Fantômas indeed! Then as now, if something "Perhaps the most beautiful Gino Starace's famous icon, a colossus astride the sells well in print, it will be—must tures descended, and when the

smoke cleared it was producer Léon Gaumont's studio that was the lucky winner of the bidding war to the film rights. Gaumont's top director and star filmmaker was a brilliant visionary by the name of Louis Feuillade. Any self-respecting fan of movie thrillers needs to know the name Feuillade, for he is the true granddaddy of the suspense film, and a direct source of influence on Fritz Lang, Alfred Hitchcock, and everyone else of consequence.

During his brief but prolific career, Feuillade helmed some 800 motion pictures for Gaumont, at a rate of roughly 80 every year. He became known for his serialized thrillers, which included the Fantômas films, LES VAMPIRES (1915),

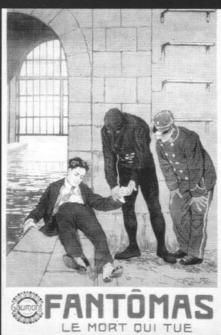
and JUDEX (1917).

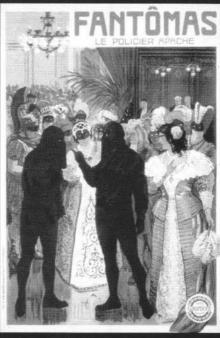
Objectively speaking, Feuillade's technique is literally primitive-the D.W. Griffiths and Thomas Inces, the Fritz Langs and F.W. Murnaus, the Eisensteins and Kuleshovs had yet to develop the film language that we know today. That Feuillade's films, manufactured at the very dawn of the medium, can still thrill and enrapture modern audi-



tear-away cloak fitted with rubber PAGE 56: Fandor meets Fantômas in FANTÔMAS (1966). Both are played by Jean Marais. ABOVE:







ences speaks to something else in their construction: their entrancing, dreamy images, their seductively illogical narratives. Feuillade's world was curiously modern, even post-modern, for his day. He understood the inherent menace in technology, the pervasiveness of evil, the untrustworthiness of appearances. Still, it is not quite the case that Feuillade's films were ahead of their time. Watching most silent films gives one the impression of peering through a window into the past, a vision of a simpler and more innocent age. Watching Feuillade's films gives the impression of peering through a window into some alternate dimension, to a time and place that has never existed.

Which brings us to the Surrealists

"From the imaginative standpoint, Fantômas is one of the richest works that exist."

—Guillaume Apollinaire

Andre Breton once said that the "simplest surrealist act" would be to fire a gun into a crowd of strangers. This statement has been misunderstood at least as often as it has been quoted. Whatever his intended meaning, Breton's seeming advocacy of indiscriminate murder and motiveless crime illustrates a key characteristic of the Surrealist school: a desire to challenge the social norms on the most direct, provocative platform possible. The seductive transgressions of Fantômas became a cause celebre among them: here was something gleefully, unabashedly celebrating lawbreaking, and the crowd was going wild. No apologies asked or given, the Fantômas phenomenon idolized everything it shouldn't.

Together, Max Jacob and Guillaume Appolinaire founded the Societé des Amis de Fantômas; separately they celebrated Fantômas in other ways as well. Jacob wrote two Fantômas poems in 1916; Apollinaire reviewed the Fantômas novels for the literary journal Mercure de

Blaise Cendrars, who also wrote a Fantômas poem, called the series "the modern Aeneid." The ultimate Fantômas poem, though, came from Robert Desnos, whose Lament of Fantômas quoted above was actually performed in France and Belgium in the fall of 1933 as a promotional gimmick for the latest serial by Marcel Allain, Could It Be Fantômas? Directed by Antonin Artaud with music by Kurt Weill, this ambitious roadshow featured hundreds of

performers from cabaret artists to clowns to accordion

players to whistlers to opera singers!

Of the Surrealists taken with the Genius of Crime, few were touched as deeply as Rene Magritte. In fact, Magritte's work during the twenties is sometimes referred to as the "époque de Fantômas." His paintings during this period are full of mysterious and threatening imagery seemingly derived from Feuillade's films, but it was Magritte's 1943 painting *The Backfire* that made the link explicit: almost stroke for stroke, Magritte had duplicated Gino Starace's famous cover. (Fantômas clutches a rose rather than a dagger—in the right Surrealist hands, a rose can be much more lethal than a dagger.)
In 1928, Magritte wrote the following for the maga-

zine Distances:

A THEATRICAL EVENT: Juve has been on the trail of Fantômas for quite some time. He crawls along the broken cobblestones of a mysterious passage. To guide himself he gropes along the walls with his fingers. Suddenly, a whiff of hot air hits him in the face. He comes nearer ... His eyes adjust to the darkness. Juve distinguishes a door with loose boards a few feet in front of him. He undoes his overcoat in order to wrap it around his left arm, and gets his revolver ready. As soon as he has cleared the door, Juve realizes that his precautions were unnecessary: Fantômas is close by, sleeping deeply. In a matter of seconds Juve has tied up the sleeper. Fantômas continues to dream—one of his dis-guises, perhaps, as usual. Juve, in the highest of spirits, pronounces some regrettable words. They cause the prisoner to start. He wakes up, and once awake, Fantômas is no longer Juve's

Juve has failed again. One means remains for him to achieve his end: Juve will have to get into one of Fantômas' dreams—he will have to take part as one of its characters.

The world of Fantômas is a dreamscape, and to participate is to become a dreamer oneself. Naturally, then, Fantômas became an inspiration to creative artists of many FANTÔMAS

LE FAUX MAGISTRAT

PAGE 60 LEFT: Louis Feuillade's serialized FANTÔMAS (1913) thrilled audiences around the world. PAGE 60 CENTER: Dead men walk in the world of Fantômas. PAGE 60 RIGHT: Fantômi crash a fancy-dress party in the Feuillade serial. LEFT: Blood and jewels rain from a church bell—thanks to Fantômas!

different and varied stripes.

"The essential Feuillade is to be found in those instances where reality and night-mare collide."

Roy Armes, French Film (1970)

Then as now, nothing succeeds like excess. Once Feuillade's five Fantômas serials (FANTÔMAS,

the originals.

1913; JUVE CONTRE FANTÔMAS, 1913; LE MORT QUI TUE, 1913; FANTÔMAS CONTRE FANTÔMAS, 1914; LE FAUX MAGISTRAT, 1914) proved themselves immensely popular with audiences, the stage was set for Fantômas to be remade, revived, recycled, and reincarnated over and over and over again: none, though, with quite the expressive magic of Feuillade's original formulation.

The original core product comprised 32 novels and five films created between 1911 and 1914. The final novel, Le fin de Fantômas, saw the three central characters—Juve, Fandor, and the master criminal himself—perish in the sinking of a massive luxury ship called The Gigantic (wink, wink). But were Juve, Fandor, and Fantômas really among the dead?

World War One erupted and the three creators—Allain, Souvestre, and Feuillade—went off to fight. Souvestre did not return. His colleague and friend Marcel Allain did return, and—displaying a Fantômaslike malleable identity and knack for seizing an opportunity—married Souvestre's widow and continued the Fantômas franchise singlehanded. All by his lonesome, Allain churned out 10 more Fantômas books from 1921 to 1963, dutifully bringing Juve, Fandor, and Fantômas back from the dead.

While Feuillade also survived the war, he did not continue any association with Fantômas, instead turning his attention to other serialized masterworks. Instead, the next batch of Fantômas flicks were crafted in the United States. Although only a handful of the Fantômas books, either the Allain-Souvestre originals or Allain's solo efforts, had been translated into English, they had found something of a niche audience with American mystery fans. (In any case, Hollywood has always been an insatiable consumer of other people's ideas.) In 1920, Fantômas returned to the silver screen in a silent serial of 20 episodes produced by Columbia Pictures. This serial has faded into near total obscurity, and little has been written about it, so a proper critical evaluation must be deferred, but there is little reason to expect that Hollywood's FANTÔMAS holds a candle to the work of Feuillade. The Americanized rendition was directed by a journeyman director named Edward Sedgewick, whose claim to cinematic fame is more than a little inauspicious: as a contract director for MGM, Sedgewick presided over the complete evisceration of Buster Keaton's career with such forgettable misfires as PARLOR, BEDROOM AND BATH (1931) and WHAT! NO BEER? (1933).

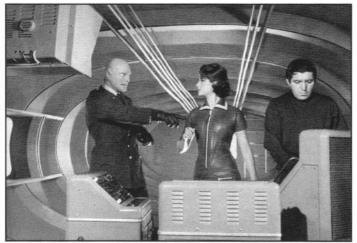
Then in 1932, Fantômas returned to his native France for a talkie written and directed by the Hungarian filmmaker Pál Fejös. The cast included Jean Galland as Fantômas and Thomy Bourdelle as Juve. (At the same time, Bourdelle also starred in the French-language edition of Fritz Lang's revival of the Fantômas-inspired Dr. Mabuse, TESTAMENT OF DR. MABUSE.) The story revolved around racing, which at first glance seems incongruous given the conspicuous lack of racing-related action in any of the previous Fantômas products. However, not only had Allain and Souvestre had originally gotten their start as the turn of the century French "Car Talk" guys, and they had also collaborated on racing thrillers such as Le Rour, so the racing motif was not entirely out of left field.

FANTÔMAS 1932 was apparently intended to launch a new series of films. Despite the film's cliffhanger ending, though, it became a dead end, and even Allain himself took to the press to attack the film as misguided and dis-

appointing.

In 1937, Surrealist filmmaker Ernest Moerman wrote and directed a short film called MR. FANTÔMAS, CHAPTER 280,000, but the next major film outing for the Lord of Terror came with a 1947 revival. Directed by Jean Sacha and with the lovely Simone Signoret in the cast, this version came closer to properly updating the spirit of the prewar Fantômas for jaded modern audiences. Signoret described the project in her memoirs as "a modernist version, with helicopters, electronic gadgets, and death rays." A sequel followed in 1949, FANTÔMAS CONTRE FANTÔMAS, with Robert Vernay as director. Neither film achieved the kind of pop-culture success that had greeted

Men hunt him, women look him up. –tag line from FANTÔMAS (1964) For a true "modernist version," complete with helicopters, electronic gadgets, and death rays, one need look no farther than the sixties revival by director Andre Hunebelle. Between 1964 and 1966, Hunebelle and a consistent team of filmmakers and actors refashioned Fantômas as pop-art eye-candy. With popular comic actor Louis de Funés topbilled, it was clear from the outset that Hunebelle's films never intended to take themselves too seriously, but would have tongue planted firmly in cheek. Not that the original formulation of Fan-





The sixties film versions of the Fantômas stories (starring Jean Marais as both Fantômas and Fandor, and Louis de Funes as Inspector Juve) were pop-art extravaganzas similar in style to television's campy BATMAN series or the films DIABOLIK (1967) and BARBARELLA (1968). PAGE 62: A Mexican lobby card is dominated by the craggy-faced image of Jean Marais, famous to fantasy fans as the transmogrified nobleman of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (1946), directed by his lover, Jean Cocteau.

tômas was necessarily outdated by the sixties. The original was about the breaking of social taboos, about discovering the hidden menace lurking in the shadows, about deceptive appearances, about how—despite what the authorities want you to believe—crime can pay and the guilty can escape punishment, about how telling the difference between the forces of authority and the forces of evil is not always easy—in short, ideas that clearly still held currency and relevance in the sixties.

Rather than attempt to translate those notions into sixties-era terms, Hunebelle catered to the same audience that flocked to THE AVENGERS and BATMAN on TV, DIA-BOLIK (1967), BARBARELLA (1968), and so on. FANTÔ-MAS 1964 is a frothy James Bond-inspired form of escapist entertainment that was concerned more with garish color, stylish visuals, pretty girls, absurd action, and gentle parody. Although Hunebelle's FANTÔMAS is a world apart from the sinister apparition that first entranced the Surrealists, that does not invalidate his approach. For what it sets out to achieve, for the standards it sets for itself, Hunebelle's Fantômas revival is marvelous good fun. With handsome budgets, Hunebelle created colorful, lush, lavish comic thrillers. While the three films (FANTÔMAS, 1964; FANTÔMAS SE DECHAINE, and FANTÔMAS CONTRE SCOTLAND YARD, 1966) received spotty distribution in the States, they were quite popular in France, and deservedly so.

De Funés starred as Inspector Juve, now depicted as a bumbling fool rather than the expert detective of the classic serials. While not quite in league with Inspector Jacques Clouseau, Juve is the source of most of the (slapstick) comedy. Meanwhile, Jean Marais does double duty as both Fantômas and reporter hero Fandor, who are played straight. The curious juxtaposition between the serious thrills of the Fantômas/Fandor scenes with the antics of Juve produces a delicate blend of comedy and horror distinctive to these films.

In addition to such personality changes, the imagery of Fantômas himself underwent a radical revision. The prewar Fantômas of the books and films often appeared as "The Man in Black," swathed head to toe in a black bodystocking. The all-black full-body sheath is replaced in the sixties with a sort of inverse mask—rather than a mask that Fantômas puts on over his true face, this Fantômas has no "true face" at all. Instead, he wear various masks to disguise himself throughout the stories, but when he pulls away the mask to reveal the face underneath it is a blank blue slate. (An inspiration for the Blue Man Group, perhaps, or an homage to the "blue screen" upon which

filmmakers project background images?) Adding to the effectiveness of this wonderfully visual conceit is the rubbery, leathery, wrinkled features of actor Jean Marais, a face so craggy that even in its natural state it looks like a mask.

While Hunebelle was revamping Fantômas as a kitschy pop-art icon, director Claude Chabrol was ruminating on a more authentic revival. Chabrol is one of the unsung heroes of film—an heir to the legacies of Lang and Hitchcock toiling away in France on a prolific output of psychological thrillers that has continued virtually uninterrupted since the late fifties. His films blend sharp-eyed satire with true horror, black comedies of the blackest kind. It has been said his specialty is "film noirs in color."

While Feuillade is considered a hero to the French film industry, there are few contemporary directors who understand Feuillade as well as Chabrol does, so it was most appropriate when Chabrol was tapped for a 1979 remake of FANTÔMAS. This time the project was conceived as a four-episode TV series, starring Helmut Berger (see *Scarlet Street #41*) and replicating the serial format of Feuillade's originals more than a feature film could. Chabrol directed the first and third installments of the TV serial: "L'échafaud magique" and "Le tramway fantome." Although rarely seen today, its popularity at the time proved that Fantômas still packed a punch.

"I can't help but throw out the notion that in his heyday Daffy Duck would have made a superb Fantômas, with Bugs Bunny as Juve . . . and Elmer Fudd as Fandor."

—Edward Gorey

A delicious suggestion, indeed! Tellingly, Gorey casts the three roles from the rosters of Warners' Looney Tunes, keeping an essential link between the figures. This is essential. Beneath it all, the Genius of Crime, the King of Detectives, and the brave but foolhardy reporter are linked, unified, codependent, each an aspect of the others' identities. It is not too outré to see in Fantômas, Juve, and Fandor a perverse riff on the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Whenever Fantômas is referred to by pronoun, Allain and Souvestre always reverently capitalize He, Him, His

Consider Feuillade's FANTÔMAS CONTRE FAN-TÔMAS. The Genius of Crime manages to move freely about through the world of law enforcement, rubbing elbows with the likes of Juve, by passing himself off as FBI agent Tom Bob. At the same time, Juve has actually been



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arrested on suspicion of being Fantômas, and Fandor has acquired a black cloak to disguise himself as The Man in Black at a costume ball. A total of three Fantômases (Fantômi?) put in an appearance at the soiree—the real deal, Fandor's impersonation, and a third just for compositional balance. All the while, ace lawman Juve languishes in prison as the purported genuine article. It's as if there is a little Fantômas in all of us. Fantômas surrounds us and penetrates us, binds the universe together—may the Fantômas be with you.

To catch out "Tom Bob," Juve takes full advantage of

To catch out "Tom Bob," Juve takes full advantage of his notoriety and passes himself off as Fantômas to the crime lord's gang, effectively usurping his rival. In the subsequent chapter of the serial, "Le Faux Magistrat," the crossing of identities takes yet a further turn when Juve actually conspires to help Fantômas escape from prison!

In Allain's first solo novel, *The Lord of Terror* (1925), Fandor himself briefly suspects Juve of being Fantômas. The ultimate blending of identities, though, occurs in Hunebelle's 1964 FANTÔMAS. Fandor has been writing stories claiming that Fantômas is a myth concocted by Juve to justify the high rate of unsolved crimes in Paris. Fandor invents a phony "interview" with Fantômas, illustrated by a photo of Fandor himself dressed as the Man in Black. Fantômas doesn't approve of anyone taking His name in vain, and in revenge starts committing crimes disguised as Fandor. (Remember, both roles were played by Jean Marais.) Juve concludes Fandor=Fantômas, until Fantômas starts committing crimes disguised as Juve, too! Both Juve and Fandor are arrested by a police force convinced they are Fantômas; Fantômas in turn helps them escape.

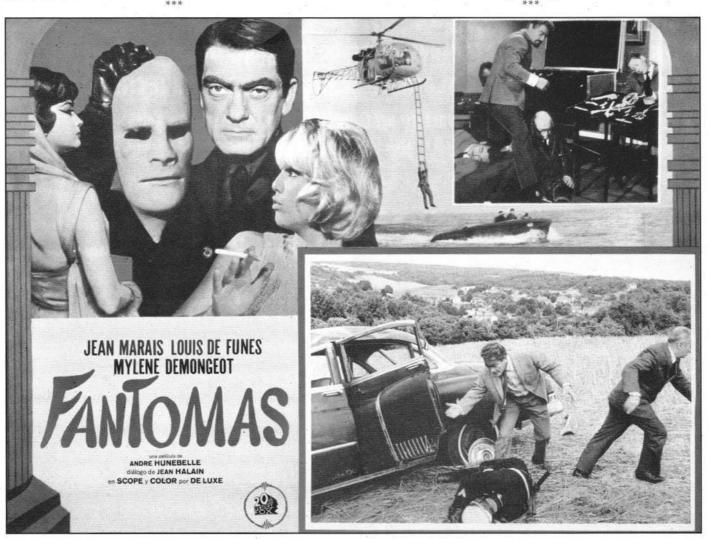
"Fantômas! . . . Juve! . . . Fandor! The three names are mutually complementary; you cannot mention one without mentioning the others."

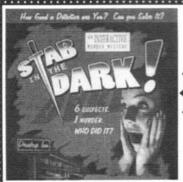
-Marcel Allain, The Lord of Terror

The facility with which Juve, Fandor, and Fantômas trade places suggests they are already not so very different from each other. Part of the reason that Juve is mistaken for Fantômas is the detective's all-consuming obsession with the crook. There are several moments, especially in the first novel, when we are encouraged to be agnostic about the existence of Fantômas—perhaps he is just an elaborate hoax of Juve's, after all, a myth conjured up to explain away unsolved crimes. Would *Time Magazine* ask, Is Fantômas Dead?

This notion fuels the 1964 film, but the casting of Jean Marais as both Fandor and Fantômas hints at a deeper and more personal connection. The link between Fandor and Fantômas has always run deep. The similarity between their names is no mere coincidence. "Fandor" was once Charles Rambert, possibly Fantômas' own son, whom Fantômas framed for some of his own nefarious activities. To give the poor young man a new lease on life without the infamy of his smeared name, Juve and Rambert concoct a new identity, Jerome Fandor. Nearly as obsessed as Juve (and in the sixties films far more effective a hero), and obsessed for more personal reasons, Fandor is a crack reporter singlemindedly dedicated to cracking the Fantômas story: Lois Lane to a criminal Superman.

In some of the later books, Fandor developed an erotic attraction to Hélène, daughter of Fantômas. Sister? Incest? More taboos, nonchalantly disregarded.







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Fantômas—The Elegant Thief
—title of the Mexican comic book

Not all versions of Fantômas were movies. The roots of the Fantômas tradition were in pulp fiction, so naturally the character spawned a comic-book series of his own—comics being the late 20th century manifestation of true pulp fiction. In the comics, Fantômas took the center stage, with Fandor eliminated and Juve transformed. In the funny papers, Fantômas alone would encompass cop and robber, hero and villain.

It had all started at about the same time as Andre Hunebelle's pop-art take. Editorial Novaro, a Mexican comic publisher, launched a Fantômas comic book that started off with reasonably recognizable adaptations of the Allain/Souvestre books. At first, the most significant alterations were minor: Inspector Juve was renamed Inspector Gerard, and while his appearance was clearly modeled on Georges Melchior's performance as Juve in the Feuillade films, Gerard was a more typical sort of detective and less of an authentic nemesis to Fantômas. Additionally, the design of Fantômas himself was more in line with Hunebelle's vision than with Feuillade's, but at least his mask was really a mask—a paper-thin white skin stretched over his face, his body clad not in black but an elegant tuxedo and cape.

That appearance marked a gradual change in Fantômas' character. His clothes marked him as a charming, genteel figure—hardly the ruthless murderer of the original books. His mask recalled such Mexican superheroes as Superargo or Santo—and so, in time, Fantômas became a Mexican superhero as well. It was a gradual transformation, but as the adaptations ran dry and the writers began concocting new adventures, he evolved into what was at worst an art-thief and at best a champion to underdogs everywhere.

Like Batman, the superhero version of Fantômas had a secret hideout and wild gadgets. Along with a team of mad

Film Noir. Americans perfected it, the French gave it a name, and cinemaphiles the world over fell in love with it. Hard-boiled crime thrillers that married pulpy plots to imaginative and innovative filmmaking technique, often at bargain-basement prices, have left a legacy that has entranced generations of film-goers. But while films like Double Indemnity and The Maltese Falcon deserve their classic, iconic, status, there are many smaller noirs that have fallen into undeserved obscurity.

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scientists and miniskirted beauties, Fantômas became a sort of art-loving Robin Hood.

Enter Julio Cortazar. An expatriate Argentinian author living in Paris, Cortazar was exposed both to the Mexican and the original French iterations of the character. In an inspired and densely self-reflexive story-within-a-story, Cortazar's Spanish-language novel Fantômas contra los vampiros multinacionales (1977) presented a fictionalized Julio Cortazar documenting human rights abuses in Latin America. When the Cortazar in the story buys a Fantômas comic, he gradually finds his world and the world within the comic book intertwining: with Fantômas' fight against the evil forces that threaten the world's libraries conflated with Cortazar's own "real-world" struggle against the forces of political repression and tyranny in Latin America.

Just as Rene Magritte had prescribed, to interact with Fantômas, one must enter into his dreamworld.

Romance on the Sigh Seas

Roznblowez

by Lelia Loban

Horatio Hornblower, fictitious hero of His Britannic Majesty's Navy under King George III, fought France and Spain during the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815). C. S. Forester (1899-1966), who wrote more than 50 books including The African Queen (1935) and Payment Deferred (1947), finished 10 Hornblower novels and left an 11th incomplete. The books cover 1794 1823. In The Hornblower Companion (London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1964), Forester wrote that he imagined Hornblower as, "The Man Alone; he may have technical help, he may even have friends, but as regards the crisis he is facing he can only act on his own judgement, and in case of failure he has only himself to blame." He lives for loyalty, daty, and honor. In 1951, Gregory Peck played the title character for Warner Base, in CAPTAIN HORATIO HORNand left an 11th incomplete. The books in CAPTAIN HOR TIO HORN-OWER, written by Ivan Goff, Aeneas ackenzie, and Ben Roberts ected by Raoul Walsh. In 1954, Bugs unny parodied Peck in a seven-minute Varner Bros. cartoon, CAPTAIN HARE-LOWER, written by Warren Foster rected by Fritz Freleng.

wing in Bugs' bunny prints, hand-Velsh actor Ioan Gruffudd (pronced Yo-an Griffith) has now played atio Hornblower in six first-rate, minute TV movies directed by An-v Grieve. (Grieve's background in the

British Merchant Navy well for this assignment.) Gruffudd, who lives with fellow actor Matthew Rhys, played one of Oscar Wilde's lovers, John Gray, in WILDE (1998) and Officer Lowe in TITANIC (1997). Robert Lindsay, whose extensive credits include Fagin in 1999's TV miniseries of OLIVER TWIST and several roles in the TV series, THE COMPLETE DRAMATIC WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE in the eighties, costars as the historical Sir Edward Pellew, who takes a fatherly interest in Hornblower's success. Celtic/Picture Palace developed the series, coproduced by A&E and United Productions. The four movies of the first series (titled HORN-BLOWER on ITV and HORATIO HORN-BLOWER on A&E) are based on Mr. Midshipman Hornblower (London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1950). A second series of two movies (HORNBLOWER again on ITV and HORATIO HORNBLOWER: THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES on A&E) is based on portions of Lieutenant Hornblower (London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1952). The six episodes begin a bit earlier than Forester's novels, to cover Hornblower's early career, 1793-1803, from midshipman to newly-promoted commander. Meanwhile, Pellew rises from Captain of the frigate HMS Indefatigable to Commodore

Both series are available on VHS from A&E Home Video and on DVD from A&E/Meridian, with Dolby stereo and TV aspect ratio of 1:33:1 All the DVDs offer scene selections and optional captions, but no language choices or commentary tracks. Though deletion of comnercial breaks leaves some odd, midscene tadeouts, the sets look and sound terrific, and play with no technical glitches. Correcting typos in the leaflets, boxes, and ifle cards, and providing proper credits for some of the bonus features would improve the overall presentation.

The first series is especially

convincing, thanks to location convincing, tranks to location shooting in Portugal and the Ukraine, and on the Black Sea aboard the Grand Turk, a mod-ern replica of a Georgian square-rigged frigate. (Unfortunately, the Grand Turk proved unavailable for the second series.) Russian craftsmen built 11 large, detailed scale models to fill out the sea battles. John Kean's classical (though not "pe-

riod") orchestra music blends well with the Georgian setting.

Historical accuracy is better than usual for TV, particularly in the second series, where the crew corrected some errors pointed out by Hornblower fans. The vorst mistake comes in the first epi worst mistake comes in the first episode, when Hornblower stands directly behind each of several ships' cannons as they fire. In real life, the recoil would clobbe him. For the second series, supervising amorer John Baker's cannons roll back several feet, as they should.

Russell Lewis wrote the teleplay for Series I, Volume I, titled THE EVEN CHANCE in the UK (1998) and THE DUET in the UK (1998) and THE DUET in the UK (1998).

DUEL in the USA (1999). As a seasic year-old midshipman, Hornblower ch lenges a sociopathic bully, Jack Simps (Dorian Healy), who rules the midmen's mess of HMS Justinian. Hornblower earns the respect of veteran seamen Matthews (Paul Copley), Styles (Sean Gilder), and Oldroyd (Simon Sher lock), and the close friendship of a fellow mior officer, a composite of several mi or characters from the novels, Archie Kennedy (Jamie Bamber). When Simpson accuses Hornblower of cheating at cards, Hornblower challenges the bully to a duel. Expecting the inexperienced young ster to get himself killed, the kindhearted, fiddle-playing Midshipman Clayton (Duncan Bell) knocks Hornblower out and takes his place in the duel. Alas, Simpson wins. Later, aboard the better-disciplined Indefatigable, Captain Pellew assigns Hornblower to take a captured French supply schooner, the Marie Gal-lant, to England. Waterlogged rice sinks the ship, but Hornblower's nerve and navigational skills save his crew in an

The fortunes of war add Simpson to the Indefatigable's crew. As Hornblower, Kennedy, Simpson, and a few other men row a small boat into a nighttime sneak







PAGE 64: You won't find anything about it in the show's publicity, but the most intense and arguably romantic relationship in HORNBLOWER is between shipmates Horatio Hornblower (loan Gruffudd, TOP) and Archie Kennedy (Jamie Bamber, BOTTOM), ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Lieutenant Buckland (Nicholas Jones), Lieutenant Bush (Paul McGann), and the crazed Captain Sawyer (David Warner). BELOW: Robert Lindsay plays Sir Edward Pellew, a true historical figure, throughout the series.

attack on another French ship, the Papillon, Kennedy suffers a noisy epileptic seizure. Forced to save the mission by knocking Kennedy unconscious (the only way to quiet him). Hornblower leaves his friend lying in the boat during the raid. Simpson secretly cuts the mooring rope, to set Kennedy adrift. During the successful British assault on the Papillon, Simpson tries to murder Hornblower. Later, during another duel, Pellew helps Hornblower settle the unfinished business with Simpson, then recognizes Hornblower's potential: "If you continue in this service as you've begun, a great fue awaits you." The DVD includes one s feature, "About C. S. Forester," a ntence biographical sketch on three

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Romance on the High Seas

Hornblower

by Lelia Loban

Horatio Hornblower, fictitious hero of His Britannic Majesty's Navy under King George III, fought France and Spain during the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815). C. S. Forester (1899-1966), who wrote more than 50 books including The African Queen (1935) and Payment Deferred (1947), finished 10 Hornblower novels and left an 11th incomplete. The books cover 1794-1823. In The Hornblower Companion (London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1964), Forester wrote that he imagined Hornblower as, "The Man Alone; he may have technical help, he may even have friends, but as regards the crisis he is facing he can only act on his own judgement, and in case of failure he has only himself to blame." He lives for loyalty, duty, and honor. In 1951, Gregory Peck played the title character for Warner Bros., in CAPTAIN HORATIO HORN-BLOWER, written by Ivan Goff, Aeneas MacKenzie, and Ben Roberts, and directed by Raoul Walsh. In 1954, Bugs Bunny parodied Peck in a seven-minute Warner Bros. cartoon, CAPTAIN HARE-BLOWER, written by Warren Foster and directed by Fritz Freleng.

directed by Eritz Freleng.
Following in Bugs' bunny prints, handsome Welsh actor Ioan Gruffudd (pronounced Yo-an Griffith) has now played Horatio Hornblower in six first-rate, 100-minute TV movies directed by Andrew Grieve. (Grieve's background in the

British Merchant Navy suits him well for this assignment.) Gruffudd, who lives with fellow actor Matthew Rhys, played one of Oscar Wilde's lovers, John Gray, in WILDE (1998) and Officer Lowe in TITANIC (1997). Robert Lindsay, whose extensive credits include Fagin in 1999's TV miniseries of OLIVER TWIST and several roles in the TV series, THE COMPLETE DRAMATIC WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE in the eighties, costars as the historical Sir Edward Pellew, who takes a fatherly interest in Hornblower's success. Celtic/Picture Palace developed the series, coproduced by A&E and United Productions. The four movies of the first series (titled HORN-BLOWER on ITV and HORATIO HORN-BLOWER on A&E) are based on Mr. Midshipman Hornblower (London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1950). A second series of two movies (HORNBLOWER again on ITV and HORATIO HORNBLOWER: THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES on A&E) is based on portions of Lieutenant Hornblower (London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1952). The six episodes begin a bit earlier than Forester's novels, to cover Hornblower's early career, 1793-1803, from midshipman to newly-promoted com-mander. Meanwhile, Pellew rises from Captain of the frigate HMS Indefatigable

to Commodore.

Both series are available on VHS from A&E Home Video and on DVD from A&E/Meridian, with Dolby stereo and TV aspect ratio of 1:33:1. All the DVDs offer scene selections and optional captions,

but no language choices or commentary tracks. Though deletion of commercial breaks leaves some odd, midscene fadeouts, the sets look and sound terrific, and play with no technical glitches. Correcting typos in the leaflets, boxes, and title cards, and providing proper credits for some of the bonus features would improve the overall presentation.

The first series is especially convincing, thanks to location shooting in Portugal and the Ukraine, and on the Black Sea aboard the Grand Turk, a modern replica of a Georgian squarerigged frigate. (Unfortunately, the Grand Turk proved unavailable for the second series.) Russian craftsmen built 11 large, detailed scale models to fill out the sea battles. John Kean's classical (though not "pe-

riod") orchestra music blends well with the Georgian setting.

Historical accuracy is better than usual for TV, particularly in the second series, where the crew corrected some errors pointed out by Hornblower fans. The worst mistake comes in the first episode, when Hornblower stands directly behind each of several ships' cannons as they fire. In real life, the recoil would clobber him. For the second series, supervising armorer John Baker's cannons roll back

several feet, as they should.

Russell Lewis wrote the teleplay for Series I, Volume I, titled THE EVEN CHANCE in the UK (1998) and THE DUEL in the USA (1999). As a seasick, 17-year-old midshipman, Hornblower challenges a sociopathic bully, Jack Simpson (Dorian Healy), who rules the midshipmen's mess of HMS Justinian. Hornblower earns the respect of veteran seamen Matthews (Paul Copley), Styles (Sean Gilder), and Oldroyd (Simon Sherlock), and the close friendship of a fellow junior officer, a composite of several minor characters from the novels, Archie Kennedy (Jamie Bamber). When Simpson accuses Hornblower of cheating at cards, Hornblower challenges the bully to a

ster to get himself killed, the kindhearted, fiddle-playing Midshipman Clayton (Duncan Bell) knocks Hornblower out and takes his place in the duel. Alas, Simpson wins. Later, aboard the better-disciplined Indefatigable, Captain Pellew assigns Hornblower to take a captured French supply schooner, the Marie Gallant, to England. Waterlogged rice sinks the ship, but Hornblower's nerve and navigational skills save his crew in an open lifeboat.

duel. Expecting the inexperienced young-

The fortunes of war add Simpson to the Indefatigable's crew. As Hornblower, Kennedy, Simpson, and a few other men row a small boat into a nighttime sneak









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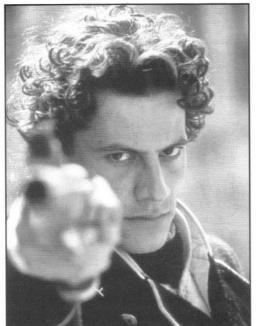
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ABOVE: Ioan Gruffudd plays Horatio Hornblower as a brave but often cautious young man, though he isn't too cautious to shower publicly on the deck of his ship. PAGE 67: Much more given to emotional outbursts, Lieutenant Archie Kennedy (Jamie Bamber, pictured with Gruffudd) is Hornblower's closest companion—sacrificing his own reputation even at the point of death in order to save his friend.

why events unfold as they do. To a lesser extent, the other five movies share this problem. The best source of help is C. S. Forester's own *The Hornblower Companion*, with maps and drawings by Samuel H. Bryant (now published in Annapolis, Maryland: The Naval Institute Press, 1998). In the first half of the *Companion*, Forester summarizes the adventures in chronological (not publication) order, with relevant dates, maps, and descriptions of the real events that inspired the fictional ones. In the second half, Forester talks about his composition methods and how he came to write the stories.

Hornblower meets his most fascinating foe in the two episodes of the second series, collectively titled HORNBLOWER in the UK and HORATIO HORNBLOWER: THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES in the USA. T. R. Bowen wrote the screenplay for Volume I, titled MUTINY in the UK (2001) and THE MUTINY in the USA (2001). David Rostul wrote Volume II, RETRIBUTION (2001).

During the making of these episodes, star Ioan Gruffudd acknowledged the great importance of relationships in the HORNBLOWER series, for both the characters and the actors portraying them. "I think what benefits this series is the fact that a lot of the actors have worked together on the last series. We spent six months of life together, so you get a relationship on screen for free, because we know each other and have kept in touch since the last series. It helps because, whenever you look into that person's eyes when you're filming, you know them. You know it's Jamie playing Kennedy. There's a knowing look for free, without even starting to act the characters and their relationships."

C. S. Forester was heterosexual. In the novels, Hornblower is likewise, but MU-

TINY and RETRIBUTION make his sexual orientation ambiguous. During their imprisonment together in THE DUCHESS AND THE DEVIL, Hornblower and Kennedy look as though they might be comrades in arms in more ways than one. Hornblower's brief, unfulfilled romance with Mariette doesn't prove he's straight, since young gay men sorting out their sexual orientation in real life often do court women. Assigned to HMS Renown in MUTINY, a 74-gun battleship fighting a Spanish garrison fort on the coast of Santo Domingo, Kennedy and Hornblower protect each other and risk their lives to save each other. Though the scripts never spell out the exact nature of their selfless love, these two episodes are full of gay eroticism.

The frame story finds Hornblower on trial for mutiny. In an extended flashback, David Warner gives a brilliant performance as Captain James Sawyer of HMS Renown, a war hero and a stern disciplinarian who slides into paranoia and laudanum addiction. In his mind, sexuality (probably including his own) becomes dirty. Ordering an innocent, boyishly attractive midshipman, Wellard (Terence Corrigan), caned on his bare back and buttocks twice for imagined insubordination, Sawyer watches the punishment with ill-concealed, sadistic relish. "It serves the little bugger right," says a Sawver sycophant. Though the English often use this common insult indiscriminately,

"bugger" means sodomite.

The Captain says smugly, "The dishonorable part of Mr. Wellard has paid the price for his dishonor." Then he turns to Hornblower: "You think to be a colluder and corrupter of your juniors and then walk away scot-free." Sawyer's tone of voice strongly suggests that he's accusing Hornblower of sexual misconduct. (Corri-

gan's portrayal of Wellard suggests he may have a crush on the slightly older Hornblower.) For punishment, Sawyer orders Hornblower to stand continuous watch for 36 hours at a time, with the threat that falling asleep on guard means the death penalty.

As shipboard morale plummets, the captain's crazy accusations of mutiny become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Third Lieutenant Hornblower, Fourth Lieutenant Kennedy, Second Lieutenant Bush (Paul McGann), and First Lieutenant Buckland (Nicholas Jones) conspire to take control. Sawyer falls or someone (possibly Hornblower; as in the novel, the truth remains murky) pushes him down an open hatch. The fall gives Sawyer amnesia and worsens his dementia.

Shortly after Foster's injury, Hornblower arranges to take a shower, a rare luxury, on deck. A large group of crewmen surrounds Hornblower to watch. Ribald merriment ensues, as Styles and other crewmen spray the fire hose wildly, "accidentally" hosing down spectators. Soaking wet, laughing, Hornblower tells his buddies to concentrate on their pumping. Styles, also laughing giddily, answers, "I'm pumping as hard as I can, sir!" "Pumping" literally describes the action that supplies the spurting fire hose with water, but the fact that Styles isn't pumping-he wields that rather phalliclooking hose—calls attention to the way another crewman's vigorous pumping action suggests the secondary, sexuallycharged double meaning of the word. Meanwhile, the stark-naked Hornblower seems to thoroughly enjoy the admiring gaze of all these fully-clothed sailors.

Then the wild-eyed captain suddenly appears on deck. Brandishing two pistols, he roars, "This is my ship, not a public bathhouse!" Sawyer's tone of voice sug-

gests that he uses this provocative language deliberately. Public bathhouses are well-known trysting places for gay men. Sawyer orders Hornblower and other participants arrested. Soon afterward, Sawyer's loyal friend, Dr. Clive (David Rintoul), finally certifies the captain as unfit for duty.

Lt. Buckland assumes command, but proves an inadequate replacement for the captain, whose bravery and intelligence shine through his insanity. Sawyer and Wellard finally reconcile their dispute, dying side by side during a battle between escaped Spanish prisoners and the crew of the Renown. On land and at sea, Hornblower's heroism once again rallies the crew, to defeat the Spanish. After the battle, the men find Lt. Buckland, asleep when the fight for the Renown began, tied up but uninjured except for his pride. It's Hornblower who earns respect from Buckland's second-in-command, Lt. Bush. Though wounded, Bush will survive, to become an important friend later in the young officer's career. Tragically, Archie Kennedy's wounds prove far worse.

At Hornblower's 1802 mutiny trial in Jamaica, Commodore Pellew, as one of three judges (the others are played by Ian McElhinney and John Castle), lobbies the others not to make Hornblower a scapegoat. Pellew brings out the fact that Hornblower took charge of the battle because Buckland failed to command. In private chambers, Pellew tells the other judges, "I will not hang out of hand a man so dear to me as my" He pauses for a long time, then completes the thought: "as one of my very own." He has come to love Hornblower as a son.

Robert Lindsay, who plays Pellew, didn't realize when he first accepted the role that the captain had actually lived. "In fact, Pellew is the only factual figure in it. I've had letters from his family. They live in Falmouth, and I think are still seafaring people. It's quite weird to play a character and then get letters from his great-great-grandchildren! And it's very flattering to be told that you're doing the character justice."

Cracking under Pellew's pointed questions, Buckland accuses Hornblower of pushing Captain Sawyer down the hatch and claims that the bullying gunner and warrant officer, Hobbs (Philip Gennister), will support the allegation. Hobbs has been Hornblower's adversary and Captain Sawyer's strongest henchman, but contrary to expectations, Hornblower's valor has won Hobbs over. He testifies. "I'm afraid I cannot tell you who pushed him, Sir." The judges decide to ask Hornblower directly whether he pushed the captain. Hornblower's reputation for honor is so strong that the judges believe he will tell the truth. If he confesses, he will hang.

Before Hornblower can testify, however, the dying Lt. Kennedy leaves the hospital, staggers into the courtroom, and voluntarily declares, "I alone pushed Captain Sawyer into the hold." Later, at Kennedy's hospital bedside, Hornblower asks his friend. "Why?"

"Look at me," Kennedy quietly answers. His gut has bled through his bandages. "There isn't a gallows in the world that can touch me now Poor Horatio. So quick to give and so slow to accept the simplest gift Just take it and say goodbye."

Kennedy dies moments later. Hornblower sits by the bed in a somber vigil. In a series of dissolves, the light in the room changes with the passing of many hours, Kennedy's corpse is removed, and the bed becomes clean. When Pellew brings Hornblower the news that he's been commended and promoted to commander instead of condemned, Hornblower asks, "Do you think Mr. Kennedy was telling the truth?"

"I think that Mr. Kennedy was a man of great loyalty, Sir," says Pellew with diplomatic reserve. Kennedy's sacrifice and Hornblower's mourning packs an emotional punch that seems undeniably romantic. Tellingly, it is only in the next, as yet unproduced episode, that Hornblower marries. Says loan Gruffudd:

"I don't think people will quite understand why he would marry Maria. She is sort of a young servant girl, and not necessarily beautiful, so that's interesting. Why would he fall in love with her?"

Could it be that he settles down to marriage because he's already lost the great love of his life? It's all in the subtext, but the possibility is difficult to ignore—and impossible to find in the novels.

"Kennedy really only appears in the books in a couple of paragraphs," says Jamie Bamber, the actor who plays him. "Initially, when I took up the character, I don't think the intention was to take him as far as he's come. He's quite an enthusiastic, ebullient character at heart, but sensitive."

The DVD of THE MUTINY includes two bonus features. The "Interactive 3D Naval Cannon" is a diagram of a cannon

Continued on page 77





RETURN OF THE HORROR KING

Continued from page 48

gone up, but I would have insisted on a percentage of the gross-and believe me, I would have gotten it. It wasn't only Hammer that threw me up, but Amicus kept it from me; everybody did, for obvious reasons. After I found out, I asked my agent to ask for a percentage, but he wouldn't, for which I find it very difficult to forgive him, quite frankly. He said we'd never get it. I said, "Well, maybe not, but ask." He said, "Hammer would never agree to it." I said, "Ask! Hammer is the only independent British film company in existence that has guaranteed mass distribution of its films by any American company." At the time, Universal was taking Hammer films, as was Columbia, Fox, Warner Bros.-I don't think there was a major that didn't take a Hammer movie.

SS: Warner's did well with DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE.

CL: They made millions! They promoted it superbly. The first one—HOR-ROR OF DRACULA, as it was called in America—the first one, in proportion to what it cost, holds the record for a British picture in terms of what it got back all over the world. And it's still being shown, needless to say.

SS: You had good cause to tell your agent to ask for more money.

CL: I said, "If you don't want to ask Hammer, speak to the representative of whatever American company is going to do the next picture. Speak to their representative in London and tell them your client is insisting on a percentage of the gross. I have reason to believe that Hammer has a large number of films lined up, they have a big program, and they're going to ask me and Peter, together or separately, to appear in many of these pictures. You know and I know that they can't make these films without us. In fact, in some instances a picture has already been proposed. So ask them, because they can't do it without me." He wouldn't.

SS: Did you leave him when he refused?

CL: There wasn't anybody else to go to, really, so I stayed with him-but I find it very difficult to forgive that. I mean that in a purely mercenary way, and I'm not ashamed to admit it. I was being exploited. Now, I don't really object to that, because we're always exploited; it's the nature of the game. I've no illusions about the film industry. An actor is only offered worthwhile parts and paid a worthwhile salary because of the commercial value that he has to the company that makes the picture and to the distributor thereof. I was also perfectly well aware of the fact that I was not necessarily employed because of my dramatic abilities.

SS: You were a horror star.

CL: Whether it's Bogart in a rain coat or me in a cape—take any actor over the last 30 or 40 years and dissect the reasons why they played this or that, and it's quite obvious that it's not necessarily because of their talent.

SS: It's their marketability.

CL: Exactly! I knew that was why I was being offered these horror pictures, so naturally I felt the labor was worthy of a higher salary and I should take advantage of the market. That sort of thing never happened in the UK, and that made me think about changing direction-literally! (Laughs) I realized that I was being exploited. I realized that I could continue to work in England for the same salary in the same kind of picture, and I could make a very adequate living and I would become bored and inevitably end up by boring the audience. I would become frustrated. There would be no challenge to me as an actor; I would not be, as we say, stretched. I would go on making a comfortable living and becoming more and more frustrated as a creative person. I also knew there was a limit to what I could ask for from Hammer, because the budgets were too small.

SS: Which is why Hammer kept trying to make a Dracula film without Dracula—or rather, without you.

CL: They figured they'd write the story first and then see where they needed Dracula—or whether they needed him at LEFT: Longtime friends and costars Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee were reunited one final time, when they recorded the narration for Ted Newsom's fright film documentary 100 YEARS OF HORROR (released in 1996). PAGE 69 TOP: An Italian one-sheet for HORROR OF DRAC-ULA (1958, courtesy of Ron Borst). PAGE 69 BOTTOM: The inspiration for the popular breakfast cereal Toast Ghosties—Christopher Lee in HORROR OF DRACULA.

all! It was quite obvious when I read the scripts that they didn't really know what to give me to do or even say, which is the reason why DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS was a picture in which I never said a word! I had read the script and the dialogue was so unspeakable that I said, "Look, I'd rather play this as a mute without a single word of dialogue than say lines like, 'I am the Apocalypse!'" That was one of the lines! Oh, it was quite unbelievable

SS: That being the case, the characterization worked much better without dialogue. CL: It reached a point of such deterioration, of such degradation of the character. I said, "Why don't you use some of Stoker's lines? Why don't you use some of his situations, some of his scenes, because they've seldom been used." Finally, I told them the time had come to call a halt, because they were selling these pictures entirely on the basis of my appearing as Dracula. I said, "I don't want to do it anymore. I'm getting typecast, I'm getting totally disenchanted with this particular part. It's preventing me from getting work which I know I can do, but which other people do not necessarily know I can do because I haven't been able to show them."

SS: Is that the reason you didn't get the title role in DR. NO?

CL: No, that had nothing to do with it. Ian Fleming was my cousin, and he wanted me to play Dr. No. By the time we got around to discussing it, though, it had already been cast. My only regret is that Ian never saw me play in one of his stories. He was gone by the time I did THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN. In any event, I told Hammer, "That's it! I'm finished!" I had to break the typecasting, the idea that you couldn't have Christopher Lee in a film about the Battle of Britain because everyone will think it's a horror film. (Laughs) Harry Salzman was actually reputed to have said.

Next Issue: It's No, No, to Dr. No, but yes, yes, to the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu, as we conclude our interview with horror legend Christopher Lee

THE MANY FACES OF CHRISTOPHER LEE

Continued from page 49

Holmes is no exception. He will say something delightful and charming and flattering, and in the next sentence, in goes the needle.

SS: Your association with Harry Alan Towers goes back to the Fu Manchu movies in the sixties. Was he instrumental in bringing you into the GOLDEN YEARS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES project?

CL: So far as I know, he was. He was the one who communicated with me that it was his idea to make these films with Harmony Gold. It was his idea to make a series of them.

SS: You've been friends with Patrick Macnee, who played Watson in THE GOLDEN

YEARS, since school days. CL: I'm afraid I behaved extremely badly on those films. Nobody's ever succeeded in making me laugh on camera by deliberately trying to make me laugh, but I have frequently been broken up by things that have happened by accident. Patrick, who is one of my oldest friends, possesses a quality which convulses me. It's quite unintentional on his part and I'm afraid I've behaved on occasion quite disgracefully, but he plays Watson so wonderfully well-this blank disbelief that crosses his face when Holmes comes up with an outrageous suggestion. There's one scene where Holmes stops his carriage on the crossing with a train coming, and Watson says "Holmes, Holmes, Holmes, I don't think they see us" and it completely broke me up. It's just one of those things that can happen; there are certain moments where a look, a twitch of an eyebrow, or an expression crosses somebody's face and you're gone. And this happened to me more in the making of these two films with Patrick than I've ever had in my

entire career! SS: Well, at least you had fun.

CL: Oh, we did! Physically, it was very demanding. I had 90 days work with one day off. We did the first one and I don't think I had a day off. Came back to London for two days, had all the shots at once, and went straight down to Zimbabwe. The day after we arrived we were working on the second film. We were shooting during the daytime in temperatures which were anything up to 45 degrees Centigrade and humid. That's between 15 degrees and 120 degrees Fahrenheit!

SS: You played Sir Henry in the Hammer production of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. It's stressed that he has

a heart condition . . .

CL: Yes, it was that damned spider, and believe me it was not all that far from being a genuine heart attack. (Laughs) I have an absolute horror of spiders. And in this scene, when the spider comes out of the boot and gets onto Sir Henry Baskerville's shoulder—I've been many

times complemented on my brilliant acting in that scene, with sweat pouring off my face, and visibly changing color. It wasn't acting at all! I was absolutely appalled! And it was a real one. A birdeating spider from the zoo. The keeper was standing just out of range of the camera with a box to bang over the spider if it started becoming aggressive. So that very nearly did bring on a coronary, I can tell you!

SS: There was trouble getting the hound to cooperate during the filming, wasn't there?

CL: Yes, I'm afraid that's true. Pity, really, but how do you do it? How do you make a real dog look the size of a donkey, which is the way he's described in the book. You can't. There is no such dog! So you get the biggest dog you can find—in this case it was a great dane called Colonel—and you put something on its face and take it to the studio, where it becomes accustomed to everybody. It was extremely friendly and, of course, when it was supposed to attack me, it wouldn't. So they rather annoyed it—which is not the wisest thing to do with a great daneand eventually, out of sheer irritation, it did go for me and in fact bit me, but not severely.

SS: From this vantage point, do you look back on your horror films with fondness? CL: Oh, yes! Most of them—certainly not

CL: Oh, yes! Most of them—certainly not all of them—but most of them, yes. They were of tremendous importance to me at the time. They were great launching pads for me as an actor. I shall always be grateful for that.

SS: Dracula is your most famous role. Under any circumstances, would you play the Count again?

CL: I don't think so. I can't see how I could, quite frankly. I'm too old, now. I'm still waiting for somebody to play the character as described by the author. I got fairly near it in one less-than-excellent picture, in which I started as an old man and gradually got younger, which indeed is in the book. But nobody has ever, ever, done Bram Stoker's book exactly as he wrote it.

SS: How would you describe the character of Frankenstein's Creature in THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN?

CL: A child. I had seen Boris Karloff's performance in the three Frankenstein films that he did. I thought it was one of the most brilliant pieces of acting I've ever seen, and still think so. The one preeminent quality in his performance was this childlike quality and the loneliness, the sadness of an unwanted being. I've always tried to put an element of sadness and loneliness into every one of those characters, because it's unconventional. It's unexpected and, if you get the sympathy of the audience, it creates a far greater impact when you do something that could be construed as destructive or wicked. They say, "Poor thing, he didn't really mean to do it. He had no choice." I played the Crea-



ture—so far as I could imagine this—as a being made altogether, literally, from pieces of other people. With a damaged brain. I tried to play the character like an ill-coordinated, childish creature who had no control over his emotions. We weren't allowed to copy the makeup, of course, because that was copyright Universal Films. So we couldn't use the Karloff makeup, which is just as well because mine was bad enough. Some critic said that I looked like a road accident. (Laughs)

Next Issue: Kharis the Mummy stalks, The Gorgon slithers, and Fu Manchu sets out to conquer the world....



BOOK ENDS

The Scarlet Street Review of Books

THE MIKE HAMMER COLLECTION: VOLUME ONE

THE MIKE HAMMER COLLECTION: VOLUME TWO

Mickey Spillane

New American Library, 2001 Volume One: 516 pages—\$15.00 Volume Two: 518 pages—\$15.00

Following an introduction by mystery writer Max Allan Collins, readers of the first volume of Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer classics (1947's I, the Jury; 1950's My Gun is Quick; 1950's Vengeance is Mine) will find themselves transported to the brutally savage underworld streets of post-World War II New York City. Even after some 50 years, these vintage and long out of print stories still pack one heck a hard punch. Collins, who has himself created a superb series of historical crime novels with his own detective (Nathan Heller), openly acknowledges the debt he owes to his mentor.

Mystery maestro Lawrence Block, who does the honors of introducing the second volume of Hammer adventures (1951's One Lonely Night; 1951's The Big Kill; 1952's Kiss Me, Deadly) calls these stories "comic books for grown ups." There's truth in that assessment. Spillane began his career as a comic-book writer and his prose often evokes "in your face" graphic mayhem. Spillane's writing horrifies and attracts at the same time. Here's a sample from Vengeance is Mine:

"I palmed that short nosed 32 and laid it across his cheek with a crack

that split the flesh open. He rocked back into the chair with his mouth hanging, drooling blood and saliva over his chin. I sat there smiling, but nothing was funny."

There's a famous scene in THE ADVENTURES OF CAP-TAIN MARVEL (1941), the serial incarnation of the popu-

lar comic-book character, in which the good Captain is confronted by two thugs on a rooftop. The bad guys would like nothing better than to toss the costumed hero off the building to his death, but before they can act, Marvel does exactly that to them! It's a child's sense of absolute justice, without all the "nonsense" of reading the thugs their rights and hauling them off to jail, where a corrupt law system will surely set them free. Instead, Captain Marvel quickly and cleanly stops the evil at its source. Mike Hammer is like that, and Spillane's books are chock full of similarly disturbing, yet primitively satisfying scenes. As a private eye, Hammer's motives are pure, but his brutal methods of justice would horrify the likes of Sherlock Holmes and Philo Vance. Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe would understand, but even they might caution Hammer to tone his tactics down a little. Hammer's world, however, is more hellish, more vicious than anything his fellow detectives ever had to face.

Hammer treats most of the women he gets involved with as sex objects. Gays, lesbians, and cross-dressers are generally depicted as evil and unhealthy creatures. Hammer's philosophy is to shoot the bad guy first, and ask questions later, and his definition of "bad guy" is extensive and far-reaching.

Mike Hammer's closest friends, police chief Pat Chambers and loving secretary Velda, stand by him and help him whenever they can, but in the classic tradition of tough guy private eyes Hammer fights most of his battles by himself. Hammer is aware of his weaknesses. He loves Velda and wants to marry her someday, but he's not above sleeping with a woman who attracts him. He'll feel bad about it later, but he might do it again. He's a violent man who enjoys what he does far, far too much. If Hammer has to kick out a mobster's teeth to pry out information, he'll do it. That's how he survives in his world.

I'm looking forward to future volumes in this exciting series of reprints!

—Ĺeonard J. Kohl

Mike Hammer isn't usually on the receiving end, but he definitely is in this scene from the film version of Mickey Spillane's Kiss Me, Deadly (1952). The 1955 production starred Ralph Meeker as Hammer, and featured Jack Elam and Jack Lambert as the two thugs.



BEHIND THE SCREEN William J. Mann

Viking, 2001 422 pages—\$29.95

Regarding his movie-making philosophy, producer Ross Hunter once said: "You might just as well have a murder take place on an Oriental rug as on someone's dirty linoleum." This pretty well sums up the attitude of most of the folks who manufactured style for the masses in an industry built upon a foundation of glorious illusion—the dream factories of Hollywood's Golden Age.

In The Celluloid Closet (1987), Vito Russo illustrated how one of Hollywood's most monumental illusions was the nonexistence of homosexuals, but what comes as something of a shock—as revealed in William I. Mann's Behind the Screen-is the extent to which gay artists who plied their multifarious trades on every level of the business happily and contentedly contributed to that illusion, perpetuating a synthetic image at the seeming expense of gay visibility. Even that most celebrated of queer iconoclasts, James Whale, made movies informed not so much by sexual politics as by "a consciousness inspired by (his) idiosyncrasy."

Ah, but quelle idiosyncrasy! It's what gave words to Norma Desmond (screenwriter Charles Brackett's) and shape to the Yellow Brick Road (set decorator Jack Moore's). It's what prompted set decorator George James Hopkins to remark: "I would be held back having to think of technicalities instead of giving my imagination free rein." It's what makes the great Hollywood films a hell of a lot more fabulous than they might have been (if such a thing is imaginable) without the contribution of homosexuals. Behind the Screen celebrates that contribution and illustrates, through many entertaining, informative, and well-chosen anecdotes and personal recollections, how in the end, gay Hollywood managed to articulate itself on the silver screen without ever really trying to do so. In that respect, Mann's is a most triumphant and liberating accomplishment.

Dozens of extraordinary characters are marched through the pages of Behind the Screen, some of them so individually fascinating that they deserve full-blown biographical treatment. Among these are

Actor Tom Douglas broke the hearts of gay men (including director George Cu- is the legend of Hercules and Hylas, kor) wherever he went, which in his which takes place during the period case was to Hollywood to stardom on dramatized in the Ray Harryhausen the London stage, and then back to classic JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS Hollywood where he played the hand- (1963). In the film, Herc meets Hylas just some young hero in THE PHANTOM before embarking on the voyage, when OF CRESTWOOD (1932)

Anderson Lawler (the live-in lover of a youthful Gary Cooper and professional "beard" for many a dateless—and as often as not, lesbian—luminary) and actress Lilyan Tashman, "the biggest dyke Tinseltown had ever seen," who said of her happy marriage to the equally gay Edmund Lowe (with tongue apparently in cheek) "I pride myself that I interest him

more than any other woman." Then there are such thirties leading men as David Manners and Tom Douglas, the latter inspiring director George Cukor to remember the era as "La Belle Epoque."

The history of homosexuals and their artistic contribution to Hollywood's classic films is one that has gone largely unexplored. It was tempting to end that last sentence with the words "until now," as that phrase (and all the breathless grandiosity it implies) is employed no less that half a dozen times in the course of this volume. Why the fine author of this impressive tome (as well as the masterful 1998 biography of gay movie star William Haines, Wisecracker) should feel the need to repeatedly blow his own horn while deliberately overlooking the efforts of David Ehrenstein (1998's Open Secret) and indirectly smearing those of some others (Axel Madsen's 1995 The Sewing Circle) is quite inexplicable—but don't let that stop you from purchasing and enjoying this otherwise marvelous book.

-Jon Anthony Carr

LOVERS' LEGENDS: THE GAY GREEK MYTHS Andrew Calimach Haiduk Press, 2002 192 Pages-\$25.00

Here's a book with all those naughty things teachers, librarians, and other mildewed sculptors of the adolescent mind didn't want us to read back in our halcyon school days. Andrew Calimach's Lovers' Legends: The Gay Greek Myths returns the stories of Hercules and Hylas, Zeus and Ganymede, Apollo and Patroclus, and Narcissus and, uh, Narcissus, to their original gay glory, walking a fine line between restoration and proselytizing—not for man/man sex, but for the considerable no-no of man/boy sex, the touchy subject matter of many of these tales. To do otherwise—to judge, condemn, and censor would be to treat these tales no differently than they've been treated for ages, but Calimach doesn't take advantage of the occasion as a slim excuse to justify modern-day sex practices.

It's just as well, too, because how many likely lads are liable to be carried off these days by a Greek god disguised as an eagle, or can expect to see Orpheus—you'll pardon the expression-ascending?

Of particular note to fantasy film fans the young man beats the beefcake brute at discus throwing. They become companions, but then Hylas is crushed—not by his pal's tender embrace, since they're just good friends, but by a milehigh bronze titan named Talos.

How does this differ from the restored legend? Well, aside from the fact that Hercules is given Hylas as a peace

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HARRY ALAN TOWERS

Continued from page 43

from the books did carry over into the films, but we were making Fu Manchu films for audiences in the 1960s, and we wanted storylines that would be more suitable to that marketplace and time.

SS: And yet you set the Fu movies in the 1920s rather than updating them to the lames Bond era.

HT: Well, I wanted the films to retain a certain flavor, if not the plot of a specific novel. I think that the first one we did, THE FACE OF FU MANCHU, was the best of the bunch. Christopher Lee was very effective in the role, and it was a very successful film. We also had a brilliant publicist who was a tremendous help. Once the film was released, you could walk into the New York subways and see enormous posters that said "Vote for Fu Manchu."

SS: The first Fu Manchu film was very successful, wasn't it?

HT: The first three all did very well. I made the mistake of entrusting the last two to Jess Franco. I told Jess that he had finally succeeded where everyone else had failed—he'd killed Fu Manchu! (Laughs) Franco is still working today, but why is anyone's guess! As long as there's a zoom lens left in the world, he'll be working, I imagine.

SS: Christopher Lee has always made a point of explaining that the Fu Manchu films are not really horror movies.

HT: Oh, he's quite right. They're fantasies, adventure films. The few horror films I've made—PSYCHO-CIRCUS, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA—have all done quite well, though. Cost isn't espe-



The Vampire King dies again in the Harry Alan Towers production of COUNT DRAC-ULA (1970), starring Christopher Lee.

cially important in horror films. They can be made effectively <u>and</u> inexpensively.

SS: In addition to the two Fu Manchu features, he directed THE MILLION EYES OF SUMURU and 99 WOMEN.

HT: Franco was in Rio directing a sequel to SUMURU, the plan being to film the

annual carnival for local color. Well, Franco finished days before the carnival was scheduled to occur, and had nothing to do. The cast and crew were being paid to stand and do nothing what-

soever! I couldn't stand such waste, so I immediately wrote 99 WOMEN, sent him the script, and made another picture—or rather, part of a picture. We made the rest later, with Herbert Lom and Mercedes McCambridge. I did enjoy working with Franco, because he was reliable. He was always quick and efficient.

SS: After all this time, you've now decided to revive Rohmer's Fu Manchu and Sumuru characters for at least one film each.

HT: We're doing the Sumuru film first, with a German model named Alexandra Kamp in the title role. This time we're doing SUMURU as a science-fiction fantasy, where Sumuru is a strange, gorgeous princess who rules a planet occupied entirely by women. When two men arrive in a spaceship, she falls in love with one of them. When that happens, her whole life is changed. We'll do that one first, as a two-hour movie.

SS: It sounds somewhat like the plot of SHE, doesn't it?

HT: You're quite right! It does has certain similarities with SHE. Certain sto-

Next: A New Fu



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THE TOWERS OF FU MANCHU

Continued from page 35

"Who is this person you're talking about?"
"His name is Fu Manchu."

Next, it's Janssen's turn to spill a few beans. He informs Smith of Professor Muller's need for illegal supplies in order to complete his experiments, with which Janssen has been assisting. The "young" scientist provides a practical demonstration as he continues:

'In Tibet, there's a flower found only in the inaccessible mountains of the North. It's called the Black Hill

Poppy."
"The Seed of Life?" Smith asks. "This liquid here is distilled from the seeds of the Black Hill Poppy. It is what the monks refer to in the legend as the Secret of Universal Life."

"But that's ridiculous," Maria protests. "There's no

such thing!

"We discovered what they really meant, Maria. The true life, the life after this life"

Smith is grimly bemused. "Death, in fact?"

"Yes. Universal Death. A single molecule of this will be enough to coagulate the blood of any living thing. In a matter of seconds, it will on contact enter the veins, and a few drops of this will be enough to insure the death of 10,000 people."

Having dashed off a fast batch of Kickapoo Dead Juice, Janssen proceeds to demonstrate the utter unreliability of his word by touching the liquid to his handand remaining alive. Smith is disgusted (or disappointed, perhaps?), but Janssen explains that the concoction is completely harmless in any temperature above freezing.

"But below freezing?" Smith asks, although he already

suspects the deadly answer.

"Below freezing point, a pint of this would be

enough to kill every person and animal in London."

Later, over drinks, Janssen supplies Smith with a little more exposition. At one time, Professor Muller had his own supply of Black Hill Poppies, provided by the High Llama of Tibet. When that ran out, Muller was forced to obtain the illegal flowers from a businessman named Gustav Hanumon (Peter Mosbacher), owner of a warehouse near the Thames. It was then, Smith deduces, that Fu Manchu made his move, cutting off the professor's supplies and forcing him to take that fateful trip to St. Luke's cemetery. Clearly, a trip to Hanumon's warehouse is in order, and Smith and Janssen agree to investigate together.

A surprise awaits Smith when he and Jannsen enter Hanumon's outer office-namely, an Asian secretary. "I've seen her before somewhere," Smith muses, "or else she's

very like someone."

She is, of course, Lin Tang (Tsai Chin), the daughter of Fu Manchu. In Sax Rohmer's stories, the character begins life as Fah Lo Suee (appropriately, in 1931's The Daughter of Fu Manchu), then becomes Koreani after Daddums sends her through the deadly Lotus Gate (in 1934's The Trail of Fu Manchu) and wipes all traces of her previous existence from her mind. (Why Towers chose to name her after a breakfast drink remains one of life's little mysteries.) She's a complex character, perhaps the most complex in the canon, seeking to take control of her father's organization, the Si-Fan, but time and again brought back into harness and persuaded to carry out her old man's sinister plans. No such ambiguity colors the screen versions of the character. Whether played by Anna May Wong (Princess Ling Moy in DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON), Myrna Loy (Fah Lo See in THE MASK OF FU MANCHU), Gloria Franklin (Fah Lo Suee in DRUMS OF FU MANCHU), or Tsai Chin (Lin Tang in all five Towers productions), she's behind her father one hundred percent.

Chin, the attractive young actress discovered by Oliver A. Unger and/or Harry Alan Towers in THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG, recalled her stint as a pint-sized dragon lady in her autobiography, titled Daughter of Shang-hai: An Unforgettable Memoir of Theater, Family, and a Woman's Odyssey from China to the West (St. Martin's Press, 1988):

"To be honest, had it not been for my sense of guilt I would have unreservedly enjoyed making those films. For low budget movies, they took us to some pretty exotic locations. Only one was made in England, and thereafter we gratified my wanderlust in Ireland, Brazil, Turkey, Spain, and later Hong Kong. Christopher and I prudently had our fees paid in advance. It was impossible to take things seriously on set, and there was a lot of tomfoolery about. Christopher was a generous actor, though overbearing at times; he was also parsimonious. In the years we worked together, he bought me one solitary drink, on location in Brazil. I seized on his largess and ordered the largest glass of Napoleon brandy. Whenever he and I had a closeup together, either he had to stand in as hole or I had to be raised on a platform. We speculated how small Mrs. Fu must be to produce me when my daddy was so tall, concluding that she must be a

Chin and Lee's respective heights may have been a source of humor between them, but it slightly hurts the actress' performance as Lin Tang, as does her accent. One expects Fu Manchu's daughter to be statuesque and to speak flawless, unaccented English. Still, Chin is definitely a series asset, loyally carrying out her father's orders, gamely impersonating secretaries and deaf old ladies, and even displaying a sadistic streak reminiscent of Myrna Loy's Fah Lo See, if not her sexual appetite.

"How I envied Myrna Loy . . . She was allowed to pepper up her part by being a nymphomaniac, while I was just plain wicked."

Lin Tang is "just plain wicked," which she immediately sets about proving by recognizing Nayland Smith ("the man my father hates most in all the world") and orlering Hanumon to shoot him. Trying to be suave but failing miserably, Hanumon feigns ignorance of Smith's identity.

"Smith? I still don't recollect you."

"We're a large family. Branches everywhere."

Smith disarms Hanumon-not with his casual charm, but literally, and escapes from the warehouse with Janssen. Lin Tang lets Hanumon know in no uncertain terms (though slightly fractured pronunciation) that Daddy isn't going to like his underling's failure to dispose of his old enemy, then leads the way through a secret passage to Fu Manchu's secret hideout beneath the Thames.

It's ironic that Christopher Lee, so critical of Hammer Films' mishandling of Count Dracula by relegating him to the sidelines of his own movies, agreed to play Sax Rohmer's famed creation. Hammer, after all, was simply following the dictates of Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897) by making the title character a predominantly offstage presence. Like the Lord of the Undead, the Lord of the Si-Fan only puts in occasional appearances in the novels bearing his name, (In Daughter of Fu Manchu, he doesn't even show up till the final chapter, and only then to put his errant child in her place.)

In THE FACE OF FU MANCHU, Lee gets an opportunity to shine only after 28 minutes of the film's 96-minute

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THE TOWERS OF FU MANCHU

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running time have elapsed. Previously, he's only been onscreen during the execution scene (in which he's seen but not heard) and the scene in St. Luke's cemetery (in which he's heard but barely seen). Happily, Lee's well worth the wait. His Fu Manchu is a commanding presence, his sonorous voice lending Towers' ripe dialogue an air of resolve and callous authority. Though his performance in THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU is arguably better than it is here (Fu seems to take more of a personal delight in his own evil in the sequel, and Lee makes fine use of a cold, cruel smile), the actor doesn't disappoint.

The monkey wrench that is Nayland Smith having been thrown into his plans, Fu Manchu acts swiftly. He admonishes Hanumon ("It was careless of you to allow Nayland Smith to visit your office and escape. If you value your own life, you will see that Janssen is eliminated—tonight!") and has the kidnapped Professor Muller, who has refused to divulge the secret of the Black Hill Poppy, brought before him. True to form, Fu provides Muller with incentive:

"Lin Tang," he calls. "Professor Muller has a daughter, I believe."

"Yes, father."

"Her presence here may be of value. Arrange it."

"Yes, father."

Later in the day, there's good news for the Devil Doctor. His dacoits succeed in kidnapping Maria Muller, and a phone call to Smith's flat alerts Janssen to the theft of his



The Lord of the Si-Fan looks grim in THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU (1967). Perhaps he knew that this was to be the last reasonably well-made production in the series

wife-to-be. When Smith's back is turned, Janssen rushes to her rescue.

"Petrie, phone the yard," cries Nayland Smith. "The fool's in danger of his life!"

Concluded Next Issue . . .

SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

Continued from page 29

KISS ME DEADLY MGM Home Entertainment \$19.98

Mickey Spillane's novel Kiss Me, Deadly (1952) is a hardboiled antiMafia thriller, in which his famous shamus, Mike Hammer, punches holes in the New York underworld while seeking a missing shipment of narcotics. Hammer is a man on a mis-



sion who gleefully wages war against syndicate kingpins. Although he revels in the brutality, the character is vaguely redeemed by the sincere belief that he's maneuvering to cleanse America of encroaching corruption.

Robert Aldrich's cinematic variation, KISS ME DEADLY (1955), follows the book's twists and turns faithfully (if somewhat confusingly) while managing to subvert Spillane's moral compass. Screenwriter A.I. Bezzerides raises the stakes inexorably with the substitution of a stolen nuclear bomb for the novel's

narcotics stash. Hammer (Ralph Meeker), based in Los Angeles, is a smug opportunist whose "What's in it for me?" posture informs the choices he makes. He's not concerned with fighting crime, preferring to cash in on whatever hands are dealt his way. That the lives of Hammer's friends and associates are imperiled never halts him from conducting business as usual.

Aldrich depicts postwar Los Angeles as a modern city existing in the shadow of atomic experimentation. Aside from the territorial battles between lawmen and gangsters, the primary conflict is between those who know too much and those who learn only enough to become greedy. Hammer's cocksure exploits eventually place the bomb in the hands of Gabrielle (Gaby Rodgers), a woman desperate for power. Her ruthlessness is "rewarded" by a lethal nuclear detonation that may or may not be confined to the California coast. (The book's apocalyptic climax was limited to Hammer torching the femme fatale to save his own skin.)

The DVD utilizes Aldrich's and Bezzerides' original, longer conclusion. Restored to domestic prints in the early nineties, this episode is actually more unsettling than the famous "shock edit," in which the beach house with Hammer and his assistant Velda (Maxine Cooper) trapped inside simply explodes. In the longer cut, the two of them flee into the surf of the Pacific Ocean, hopefully beyond harm's reach. The detective, however, must now confront the radiation that has been unleashed. Ironically, leaving him alive to ponder that catastrophe may well be a harsher punishment for his arrogance. The truncated ending follows the film as a supplement, along with a theatrical trailer that contains frames from the lengthier denouement. (The trailer raised eyebrows when it appeared on the laserdisc pressing of the shorter edition.)

MGM's new disc is somewhat better than previously restored VHS and laser-disc transfers, offering superior focus and stronger black-and-white contrasts. There's still some grain, but the overall impression is pleasing. The image has been matted to approximately 1:66-1, cutting incidental visual information from the top and bottom without really adding anything to the sides. Some might prefer a full-frame presentation, but the DVD is nevertheless a must for neo-noir buffs.

-John F. Black

STAB IN THE DARK Murder To Go \$19.95

Not getting the full use out of your DVD player? Try something a little different—MURDER TO GO president David Landau, the inventor of Interactive Murder Mystery dinner theaters back in 1983, has entered the home entertainment market by writing and directing A STAB IN THE DARK.

Detective Lieutenant Chester McFreedy (Dale Place) guides eager detectives (that's us, the viewers) through a mock training tape for homicide detectives. Afterwards, we're presented with a menu page, from which we can visit the Evidence Room, the Crime Scene, and the Interrogation Room, and read the Coroner's Report and FBI Report. There's also a link to Solve the Case, but we can't go there until we've accessed a few of the other

choices. Once we've sifted through the evidence, we're given a recap, and then it's time to issue a arrest warrant.

This disc is perfect for a party situation, where individuals or teams can compete to solve the crime. It's light, family friendly (teenagers and up) entertainment, with only a dash of blood in a bathtub and the coroner's report to make anyone even remotely squeamish. It's good, clean, murderous fun!

—Kevin G. Shinnick

CITY OF THE DEAD VCI Entertainment \$24.99 HORROR HOTEL The Roan Group \$19.98 HORROR HOTEL Elite \$19.99

A classic British fright film, CITY OF THE DEAD (1960, better known in the States as HORROR HOTEL) helped launch what would evolve into Amicus Films, Hammer's chief rival in the horror sweepstakes. The New England town of Whitewood is cursed in 1692 by witch Elizabeth Selwyn (played by Patricia Jessel, perhaps best known as Domina in the 1966 comedy A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM). Elizabeth's curse holds the town in its grip, even 300 years after she is burned at the stake.

Following the prologue, we find ourselves in modern-day New England, where Nan Barlow (Venetia Stevenson), a student of Professor Driscoll (Christopher Lee), goes missing after traveling to Whitewood in order to research witchcraft. Nan's brother, Richard (Dennis Lotis), and boyfriend, Bill Maitland (Tom Naylor), decide to investigate, but they're already too late-Nan, barely a third of the way into the film, has been murdered!

Film historians have noted the similarity in story structure to Alfred Hitchcock's PSYCHO (1960), but HORROR HOTEL was released theatrically first. (Robert Bloch's 1959 novel, of course, predated both films.) British lensed, the actors and filmmakers make a game, mostly successful effort at giving the film an all-American ambiance. (Lines such as "Ring up Whitewood" and the pronunciation of such words as "going" give away the country of origin.) Entirely shot in the studio, the film creates its own dark, mystical world, with an ever-present mist rising around Whitewood. So pervasive is the fog that it practically becomes an important character in the film!

Since the demise of its American distributor (Trans-Lux), HORROR HOTEL has existed in public domain copies of variable quality. First to release a decent print on DVD was Elite. The disc contained 45 chapter stops and a simple but impressive menu page, but the only extra was the original theatrical trailer. Next, Troma acquired distribution of The Roan Group library and released a fine DVD. Transferred from a 35mm print, the

film has sharper sound and picture than Elite's print, but it's also somewhat darker and loses some contrast. The disc contains only 11 chapter stops and the menu is rather plain, but the disc includes trailers for other Roan titles (though,



strangely, not for HORROR HOTEL!), some background info, and, most important, an exclusive interview with star Christopher Lee. Unfortunately, the disc also features an "Easter Egg" with Lee making a comment obviously not meant for release.

VCI has now released a definitive DVD, using the original British title, CITY OF THE DEAD. The print is by far the cleanest ever released of this film. The subtle shadings of cinematographer Desmond Dickinson's beautiful black-andwhite photography can be seen as originally intended. The print contains two minutes of additional footage, which occurs as Selwyn is tied to the stake and puts her curse upon the village.

Not enough? Okay, there are two separate cover designs (Ítalian Pulp or British Classic), video interviews with Christopher Lee, director John Llewellyn Moxev, and cast member Venetia Stevenson (daughter of director Robert Stevenson). Also included are biographical notes for the director and several of the major performers, a photo gallery highlighting many rare stills and posters, a trailer, and two separate audio commentaries, one by Lee, the other by Moxey. For horror fans, CITY OF THE DEAD is one of the most important DVDs to be released in the past year!

-Kevin G. Shinnick

THE BRIDE WORE BLACK MGM Home Entertainment \$19.98

Francois Truffaut has described his followup to FAHRENHEIT 451 (1966) as a dream, a love story, a fairy tale, and a crime story influenced by the Master, Alfred Hitchcock. His goal was "to make a film about love without a single love scene." Well, that is certainly one way of looking at LA MARIEE ETAIT EN NOIR, otherwise known as THE BRIDE WORE BLACK (1968).

BRIDE follows Julie Kohler (Jeanne Moreau), a cold, seemingly singleminded and emotionless woman, as she hunts down and kills five men. None of the men seem to know her until she tells them who she is, and then they react with horror. Of course, by then it's too late .

Based on the novel by William Irish (a pen name for Cornell Woolrich, whom Truffaut admired), THE BRIDE unfolds methodically and with a determined pace. The motive for Kohler's murders isn't that shocking (although when the film originally opened, the secret was guarded as closely as the plot twist in 1992's THE CRYING GAME), and when it's revealed halfway through the film, it has little impact. For the fun in THE BRIDE, you have to delve much deeper and heed what Truffaut was trying to accomplish: each of the five men represent a different way of looking at women, and to further differentiate them, composer Bernard Herrmann gave each a distinctive theme. Some of the scenes do, briefly but effectively, capture the dream state envisioned by Truffaut. While not one of his best films, THE BRIDE WORE BLACK is still well worth a look.

MGM Home Entertainment offers THE BRIDE in a pretty bare-bones package. Presented in it's original 1.66 aspect ratio, the source print suffers from much speckling and scratching. The color and detail are fine for a nearly 35-year-old film, but don't expect razor sharpness. The sound is crisp and clear, though it tends to be almost silent in quiet scenes and blasting in others. The soundtrack is in the original mono, in either French or English, with English, French, and Spanish subtitles. An overly melodramatic American trailer is also included.

—Jeff Allen

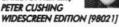


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RANDOM HARVESTER

Continued from page 29

but it's a matter of finding the right one for your movie. We were fortunate to hook up with Key East Entertainment for HARVESTERS. It's been a strong, collaborative effort in getting the movie ready for market.

SS: Tell us about HARVESTERS.

DD: It's based loosely on the same concept I used for BLOOD MASSACRE, but it's a much different movie. Joe and I spent many days and nights together developing the plot-and then the deaths that occur in the movie. A scene where a young woman takes a bath in a tub filled with blood was Joe's idea. It comes off as pretty erotic. Most of the "death devices" were Joe's concepts, as well. As a police detective and Army veteran, Joe was more in tune with booby-traps, land mines that flip out of the ground, and other devices used for the various scenes in HARVESTERS. We rounded up a few local friends to put up the money for the movie, although Joe and I put up a substantial amount ourselves. We held auditions for two days in August 2000 and cast the movie from those. We looked at 126 actors. We were already familiar with some, such as veteran George Stover. Sean Quinn came on board to help with lighting, but he ended up creating all of the makeup effects, most of the props, and all of the CGI effects. My brother, Glenn Barnes, did the sound recording. SS: Why didn't you direct?

DD: That's actually what pulled Joe and I together. One day, while we were working on ALIEN RAMPAGE, I asked him if he had ever thought about directing. He said he had, but never took the idea seriously. I told him straight out that if I did another movie, I'd like him to take a stab at directing. The reason for this is twofold: I never particularly liked directing. That task got thrust on me with ALIEN FACTOR, because I wrote the script. Also, through most of my films, I was often frustrated by what the cinematographers gave me. I only seemed to get shots the way I wanted them when I was behind the camera. In a nutshell, I wanted to be behind the camera, to have control over the visual look of the project. Of course, I also enjoy editing, which I did on all of my movies and continue to do now

SS: How long from inception to final edit?

DD: We started filming in mid-September 2000 and I finished the first cut in early March. We had our cast and crew premiere in early April, but over the next few months I cut three minutes and Sean Quinn refined several of his CGI effects. I'd say it was roughly an eight-month process, which also included creating a trailer, dubbing and sending out screeners to distributors, and a host of other duties that fall on your shoulders when you're a small company.

SS: What future projects can we expect?

DD: We are about wrapped on principal photography of STAKES, our new vampire movie. This is something we planned early last year, long before we were aware that QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

had been set for release. Coincidentally, STAKES has a vampire queen in it, but since I'm not a big vampire fan, I'm not really familiar with the Anne Rice story. After STAKES, which we hope will be finished in late March, we'll be shooting a new feature in the spring. We're looking at a zombie script, and we're also considering a screenplay I wrote 15 years ago called GRAVEYARD. We have already had discussions with Key East Entertainment about STAKES, and the film is being represented for foreign sales by Amsell Entertainment.

SS: Anything else in the works?

DD: Fred Olen Ray, through his new DVD label, is putting out THE ALIEN FACTOR in early February. The DVD will include a stills gallery and maybe bloopers. It will be available at our website. Also, my second film, FIEND, was just picked up for new foreign distribution, which may lead to a new domestic deal for a DVD release. Again, if this happens, the DVD will be available on our website: timewarpfilms.com.

RECORD RACK

Continued from page 37

COACH score was for a rather misconceived Fox remake of the classic John Ford Western, but his music is really superb, with a hauntingly lyrical main theme and imaginatively orchestrated cues that drip with atmosphere and suggest the menace and exhilaration of the Western landscape. This music was previously released as a very good studio rerecording of the score on Mainstream (LP and CD), but the FSM release is from the film's original soundtrack.

THE VIEW FROM POMPEY'S HEAD and BLUE DENIM

As I wrote in my recent Library of Congress overview of fifties film music, Bernard Herrmann and CinemaScope were both curious choices for BLÛE DENIM, a film derived from the intimate Broadway play ('The lost innocence . . the rude awakening to what they had done ') about teenage pregnancy and abortion." Indeed, only MGM's JOY IN THE MORNING (1965) was a more incongruous assignment for Herrmann than Fox's black-and-white widescreen version of a once hardhitting drama coauthored by James Leo Herlihy, who later wrote Midnight Cowboy (1965). (Needless to say, the abortion in Herlihy's original script did not make it into the film.)

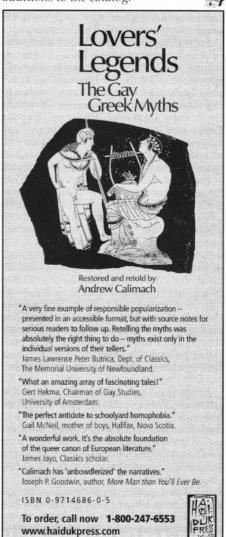
Scaling down his usually expansive orchestrations to strings, woodwinds, horns, and harp, Herrmann's music is moving and poignant (especially a deleted cue, "The Boy"), but about as suggestive of fifties American teenage angst as Schoenberg's "GurreLiedern" (unless the teenagers may have been named Madeline and Scottie). Many of Herrmann's themes, including the motif for the Carol Lynley character, are in 3/4 time, adding an even odder overlay of Viennese Weltschmerz to the proceedings. At any rate, taken as a kind of I WAS A TEEN-



Bing Crosby and Ann-Margret in the 1966 remake of STAGECOACH.

AGE VERTIGO or a rediscovered chamber work, it's lyrical and unfamiliar Herrmann, and beautifully recorded in effective stereo, with the small woodwind section taking center stage between a spread of intimately intense Fox strings. Several deleted cues are included.

Herrmann's score shares space on this FSM disc, with Elmer Bernstein's THE VIEW FROM POMPEY'S HEAD (1955) as the feature presentation. Though BLUE DENIM does grow on one, to me POMPEY'S HEAD—Bernstein in the high symphonic melodrama mode of SOME CAME RUNNING (1959)—remains the more substantial work, though both previously unreleased scores are of course welcome additions to the catalog.



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FRANKLY SCARLET

Continued from page 12

years to go! Until then . . . Scare-lots, Shriek!!"

As one of our regular online visitors so aptly put it, "You don't get these kind of great, legendary visitors on other message boards!"

Or as our own howlin' News Hound proclaimed, "Happy 85th, Mr. Ackerman, and thanks for stopping by the Forum. All us folk are pleased and proud that you grace *Scarlet Street* with your presence . . . and presents! I hope Mr. Valley will allow us to view the 4E Award . . . from a distance, perhaps . . . with binoculars . . . reflected off a mirror

Look for Forrest J Ackerman's CRIMSON CHRONICLES in the next issue of Scarlet Street, and if you're online be sure to drop by at www.scarletstreet.com. You never know who you're going to meet . . . !

refugees from WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? (1962) and HUSH . . . HUSH SWEET CHARLOTTE (1964) pop up—not only Buono, but Dave Willock, Marjorie Bennett, Maidie Norman, Wesley Addy, and Ellen Corby. Still, it's little ado about little, and hardly the Rat Pack's finest hour.

That brings us to ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS, which is their finest hour-or rather, their finest two hours and three minutes. The film's a musical updating of the Robin Hood legend, set in Chicago during the Roaring Twenties and decked out with stylish tunes by Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen. Sinatra plays Robbo, a gangster who dumps some unwanted dough in an orphanage and gets a rep for robbing the rich and giving to the poor. Martin and Davis play henchmen Little John and Will, who help Robbo oppose Sir Guy of Gisbourne and the Sheriff of Nottingham—or rather, Guy Gisbourne (Peter Falk) and Sheriff Alvin Potts (Victor Buono). Lending authenticity to the prohibition-era proceedings is movie mobster Edward G. Robinson, whose sudden demise prompts the gang war between Robbo and Gisbourne.

Dino doesn't get to do much musically, but Davis heats up the screen with a sizzling song and dance number called "Bang Bang." Sinatra gives himself only one solo, but at least it's "My Kind of Town," which quickly became one of his signature tunes. The lion's share of musical moments goes to the one and only Bing Crosby, who wanders in halfway through the show as aged orphan Allen A. Dale and all but steals the picture. Der Bingle croons "Don't Be a Do-Badder, the last of his pop songs with kiddie choruses (think "Swingin' On a Star' in 1944's GOING MY WAY and "If You Stub Your Toe on the Moon" in 1949's A CON-NECTICUT YANKEE IN KING AR-THUR'S COURT), joins the Italians for a swingin' "Style," and leads the whole gang in "Mister Booze." It's the Old Groaner's last musical, and he makes the most of it.

All three films are letterboxed and look fine on DVD, particularly the colorful ROBIN. Extras include an audio commentary with Frank Sinatra Jr. and Angie Dickinson, scenes from THE TONIGHT SHOW with host Frank Sinatra and Dickinson as his guest, and trailers (OCEAN'S ELEVEN); a trailer highlighting Ursula Andress (4 FOR TEXAS); and an audio commentary by Sinatra Jr., the behind-the-scenes documentary WHAT THEY DID TO ROBIN HOOD (actually a promotional film from the period), and a trailer (ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS).

Catching Sinatra and Company in OCEAN'S ELEVEN, 4 FOR TEXAS, and ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS is a crash course on what it meant to be cool in the Swingin' Sixties. It may be a numbers game—some may feel cheated, but if you roll that lucky "7" you're in for a good time.

—Richard Valley

OCEAN'S ELEVEN 4 FOR TEXAS ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS Warner Home Video \$19.98

BOOK ENDS

Continued from page 71

offering after a battle, that they fall in love while Hercules trains Hylas to be a warrior, that they've been together for years when they first board the Argo to search for the Golden Fleece, and that Hylas is dragged into a pool by a nymph as Hera's revenge against Hercules, her hubby's bastard son . . . well, nothing.

Lovers' Legends: The Gay Greek Myths, though sometimes too floridly written, makes for magical reading. Don't expect to find it in your library, though.

–Drew Sullivan

SINATRA

Continued from page 20

all, though, from buxom leading ladies Ursula Andress and Anita Ekberg, whose primary function is that of set dressing.) A rollicking stagecoach chase opens the film, and while this stagecoach is no STAGECOACH (1939), it's still the most action you'll see in almost two hours running time. The rest of the varn concerns cash stolen by Joe Jarrett (Martin) from Zach Thomas (Sinatra), who didn't come by it too honestly himself. The plot must have proved confusing to preview audiences, since there's a rash of post-dubbing designed to explain the action. We even have to be told to guffaw when The Three Stooges appear, their antics undercut by cutaways to Martin and Andress cueing the audience with their laughter.

4 FOR TEXAS was written and directed by Robert Aldrich, and it's a hoot seeing

GUNFIGHT AT THE DVD CORRAL

Continued from page 31

production notes. This is a DVD no Western lover should be without.

VERA CRUZ MGM Home Entertainment \$19.98

This one's got everything except a script, though Roland Kibbee and James R. Webb are credited with one and Robert Aldrich is credited for having directed it. The contrived plot of VERA CRUZ (1954) wastes beautiful location photography, lush costumes, and a strong cast headed by Burt Lancaster and Gary Cooper.

Lancaster and Cooper play ex-Civil War soldiers who head South of the Border looking for profit and adventure in revolutionary Mexico and wind up caught between the rebels and the Spanish loyalists—all of which sounds considerably more interesting than what we get in the film itself. It's an infuriating little movie, consistently defeated by trite dialogue and nonsensical plot devices. The DVD is acceptable but not special, with decent sound and picture quality, and a theatrical trailer thrown in for good measure.

THE SEARCHERS Warner Home Video \$19.98

THE SEARCHERS (1956) is quite possibly the greatest Western ever made. (I know; I said the same thing about STAGE-COACH.) Almost a half-century after its release, John Ford's harrowing saga of two men (John Wayne and Jeffrey Hunter) and their quest to rescue a kidnapped white girl (Lana Wood, and later older sister Natalie Wood) from the clutches of a vicious Indian chief (Henry Brandon) remains controversial. Although some read the film as racist, Ford's intent was certainly to illustrate the destructiveness of hatred and xenophobia.

Wayne's obsessive, borderline-psychotic Ethan Edwards stands as one of the darkest and most complex Western protagonists ever—and, TRUE GRIT (1969) notwithstanding, as Wayne's career-best performance. The rest of the cast—especially Hunter as Ethan's half-breed cousin—also account well for themselves, and include Vera Miles, Ward Bond, John Qualen, Harry Carey Jr., and Ken Curtis.

The rest of the film lives up to the performances. Winton C. Hoch's breathtak-



THE SEARCHERS (1956)

ing color cinematography alone is worth the price of admission. If nothing else, this is Ford's most visually enthralling picture. Warner Bros. presents the film in a stunning widescreen transfer with enhanced sound. The package also includes a Warner Bros. Presents featurette and the original theatrical trailer. A near-perfect DVD, befitting a near-perfect movie.

THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE Paramount Home Video \$29.98

Here's yet another Western classic from Johns Ford and Wayne, this time with an able assist from another genre great: James Stewart.

Critics have carped for years that Stewart looks too old for his part as a crusading young frontier lawyer, but it's hard to picture anyone other than Stewart being more right for the part in almost every other respect. His character, Ransom Stoddard, is a tougher version of Stewart's Tom Destry from DESTRY RIDES AGAIN (1939). Stewart instills Stoddard with the integrity the character requires above everything else.

In THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE (1962), Stewart and Wayne are opposed by perhaps the nastiest band of outlaws ever assembled, played by Lee Marvin (Valance himself), Lee Van Cleef, and Strother Martin. The performances are delightful all around, and the film displays Ford's usual technical precision, but its "print the legend" message seems oddly dated in the wake of revisionist Westerns such as UNFORGIVEN (1992). Paramount offers the film in a crystal clear, letterboxed widescreen print with enhanced stereo sound. It's unlikely that a better-looking, better-sounding version of this film will ever appear.

And by the way, the famous title song (sung by Gene Pitney) is <u>not</u> in the film, nor was it ever

RIO BRAVO Warner Home Video \$19.98

Often confused with director Howard Hawks' comedic semiremake, EL DORADO (1967), Hawks' RIO BRAVO (1959) is the one with Dean Martin as the town drunk and Ricky Nelson as the young gunfighter, the roles taken by Robert Mitchum and James Caan in the later film.

In both films, John Wayne (as a sheriff in RIO BRAVO and a gunfighter in EL DORADO) finds himself opposing the private army of a wealthy rancher (here played by John Russell). Able support is provided by Angie Dickinson, Walter Brennan, Ward Bond (of course), and Harry Carey Jr. (also of course). Slower of pace and more sober of intent than the later film, RIO BRAVO ranks second only to RED RIVER among Hawks' Western output. It's an entertaining and surprisingly resonant film.

Once again, Warner Home Video delivers an excellent quality disc, transferred from a near-perfect widescreen print, in vivid color. The DVD also features the original trailer.

THE SONS OF KATIE ELDER Paramount Home Video

THE SONS OF KATIE ELDER (1965) is a latter-day John Wayne classic, this one directed by Henry Hathaway. Once again he's teamed with Dean Martin, this time (rather unbelievably) as two members of a quartet of brothers. (Earl Holliman and Michael Anderson Jr. complete the fightin' family.) The film benefits from a superb supporting cast—George Kennedy, Dennis Hopper, Jeremy Slate, Paul Fix, and Strother Martin among them—and a well-crafted script that balances rip-snorting action sequences with careful character development.

The Elder brothers are reunited for the funeral of their mother, only to discover that, some time before her death, their father has been murdered. Yes, it's the work of another evil rancher, this one played by James Gregory.

Lucien Ballard provides lush cinematography and Elmer Bernstein a splendid background score. It all adds up to one of the best of Wayne's efforts from the sixties. Paramount's letterboxed print is tapped from a vivid widescreen Technicolor print with superb sound. Again, the only bonus is the theatrical trailer. Even so, this remains a fine package for an underrated film.

ROMANCE ON THE HIGH SEAS

Continued from page 67

linked to zoom-ins of the muzzle, trunnion, cascable, breech, and bore, with brief, absurdly obvious descriptions of their functions. SAIL 2000 is a 47-minute documentary, written by Jon Wesslen, Lee Fulkerson, and William Schlueter, and narrated by Monte Markham, about modern replicas of tall ships used in education and competition. Schlueter also produced, directed, photographed, and edited this interesting feature. The DVD of RETRIBUTION includes the same perfunctory C. S. Forester biography that's on THE DUEL. A second bonus, "Guide to Royal War-

ships," is a set of six brief title cards with specifications for first-rate through sixth-rate ships of Hornblower's era. No diagrams, alas: The same misty painting of one frigate illustrates all six cards.

Forester wrote the Hornblower novels out of chronological sequence. Most readers seem to prefer Forester's earliest books, concerning the middle of Hornblower's life. Director Grieve has already written a teleplay about Hornblower's first command. In interviews, Gruffudd and other cast members sound eager to reprise their roles. With any luck, this exceptional series might continue at least through Hornblower's best years, as a Captain.

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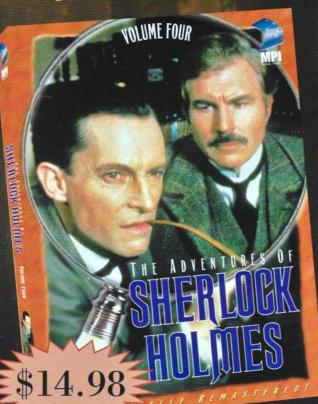
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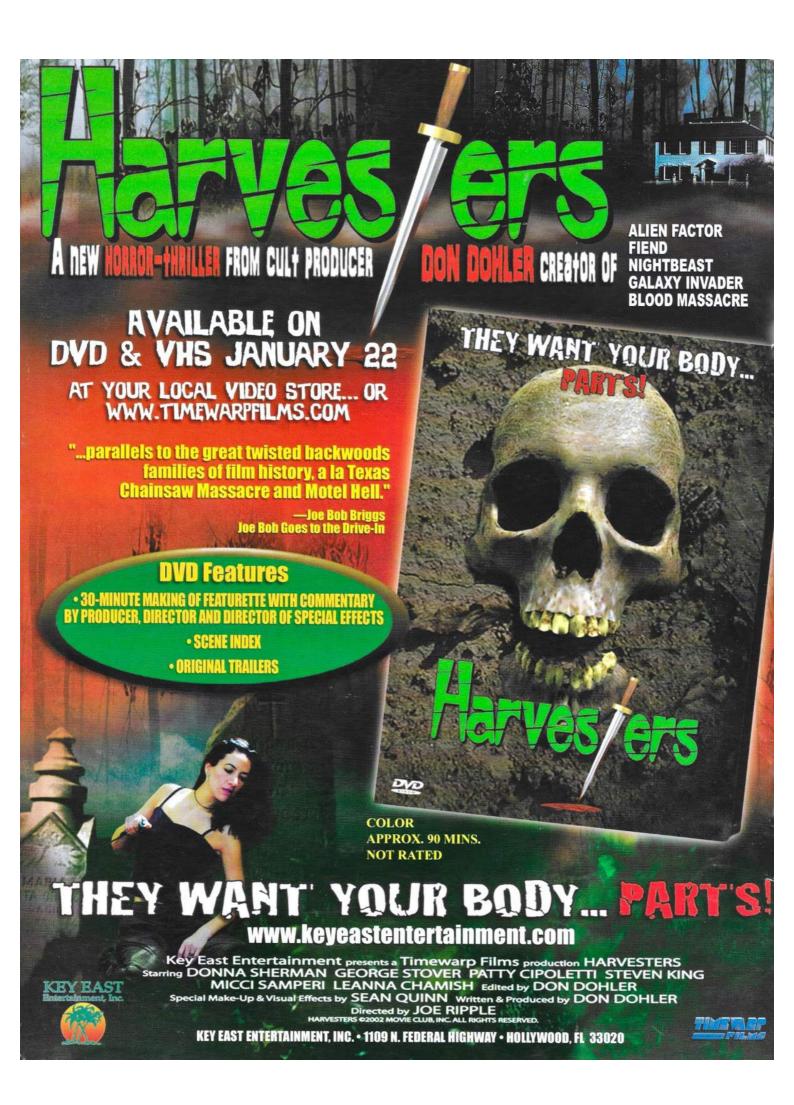


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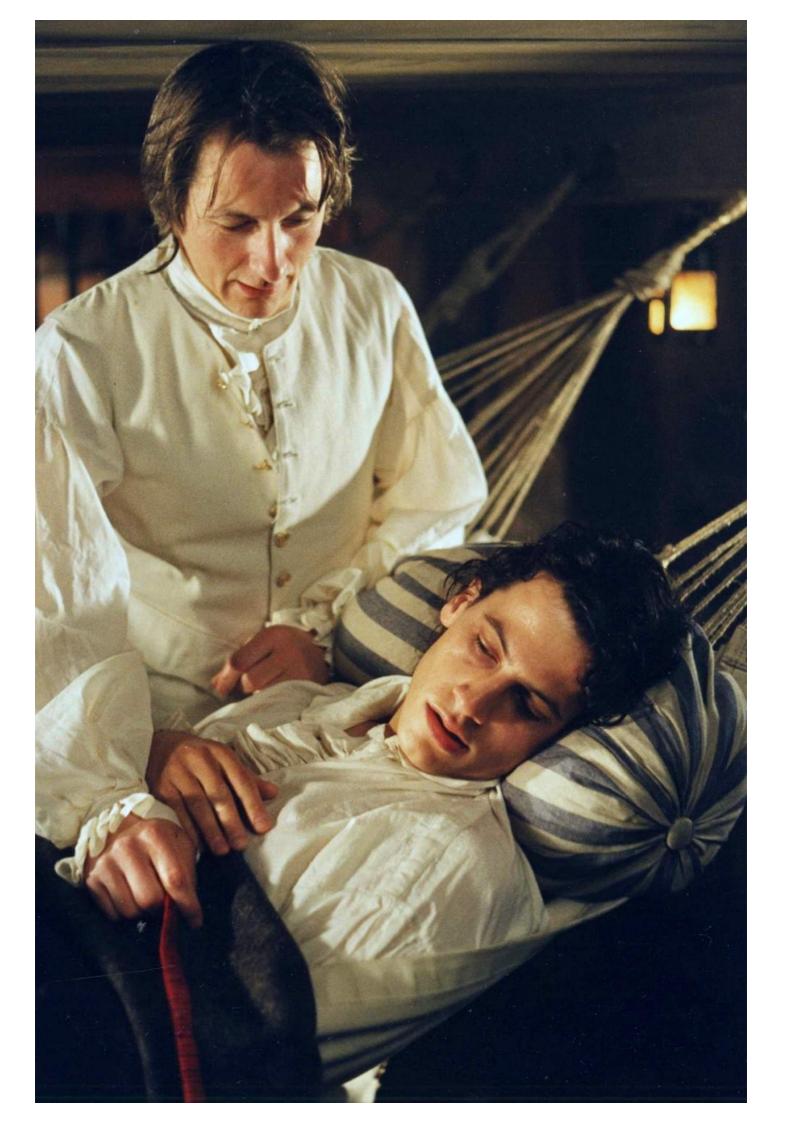


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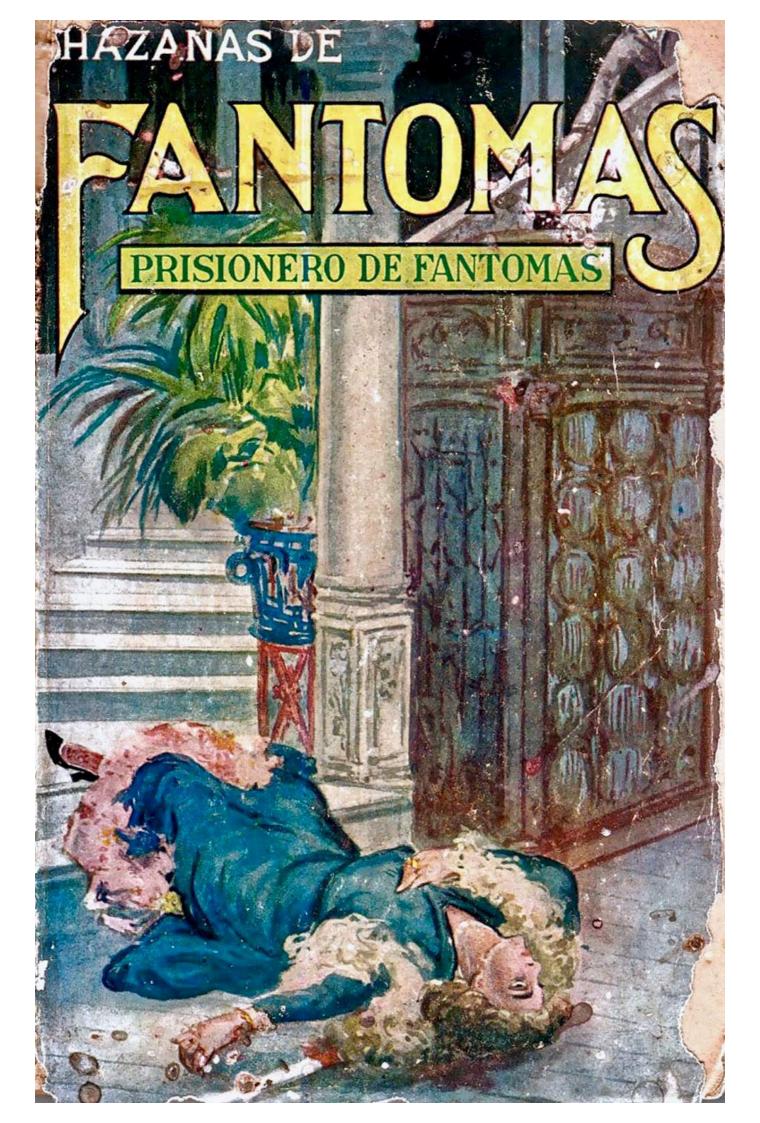


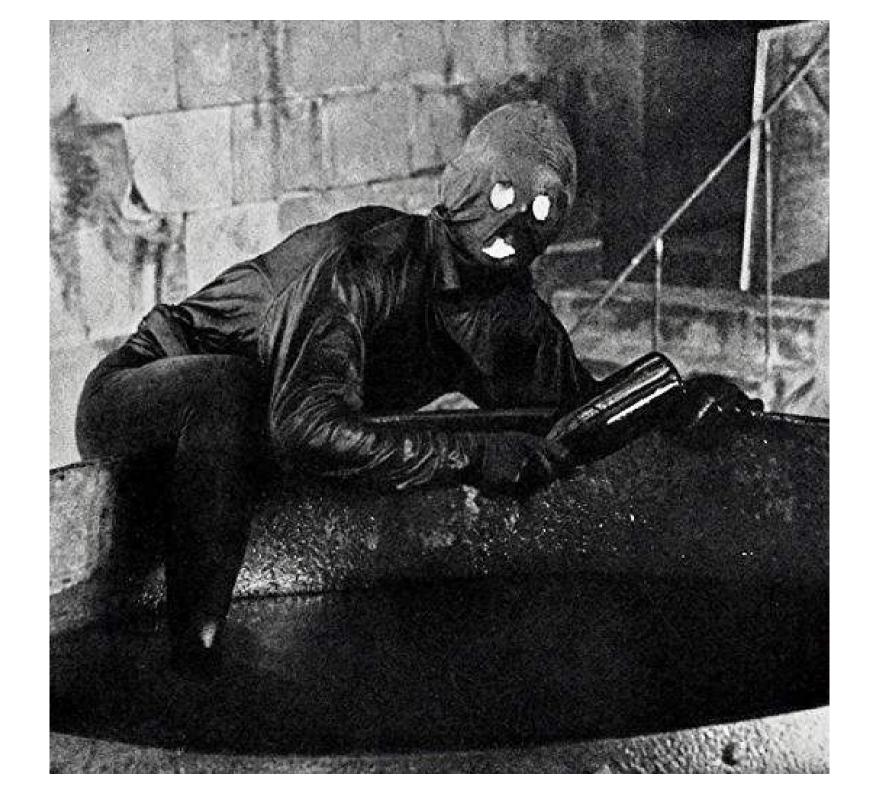
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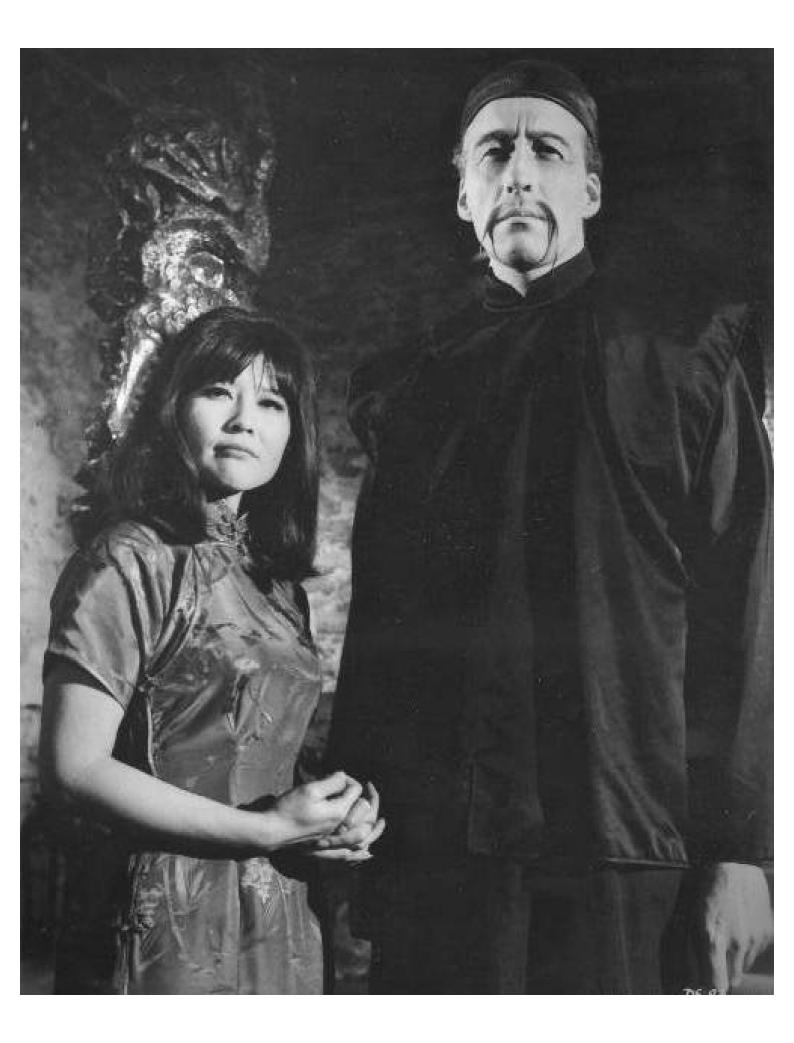
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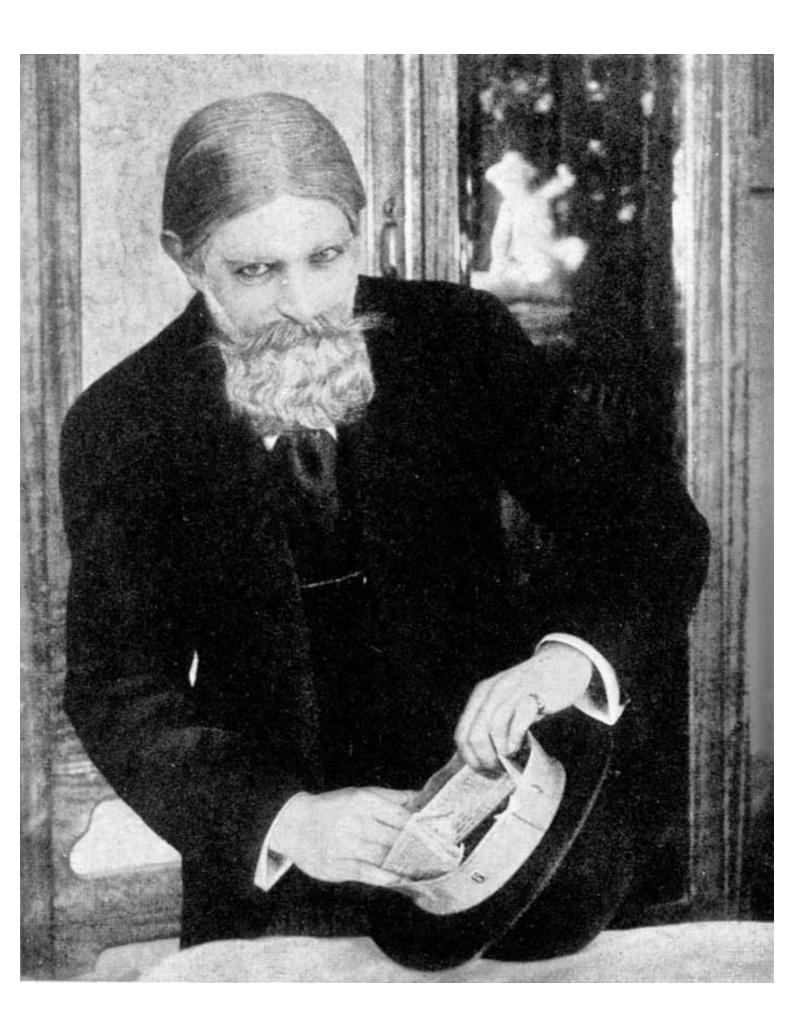




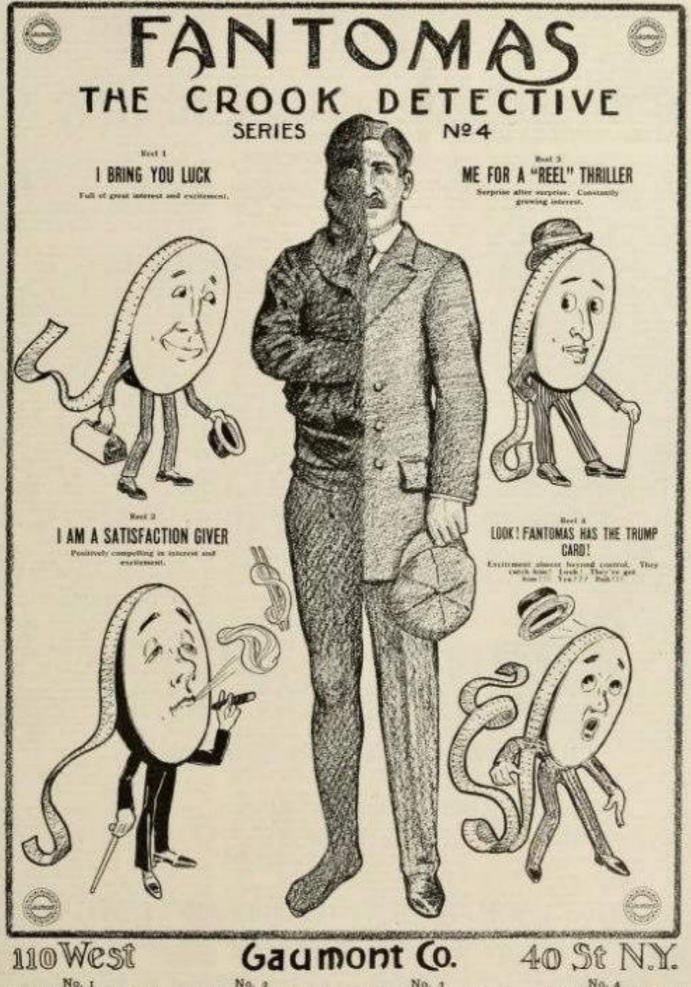












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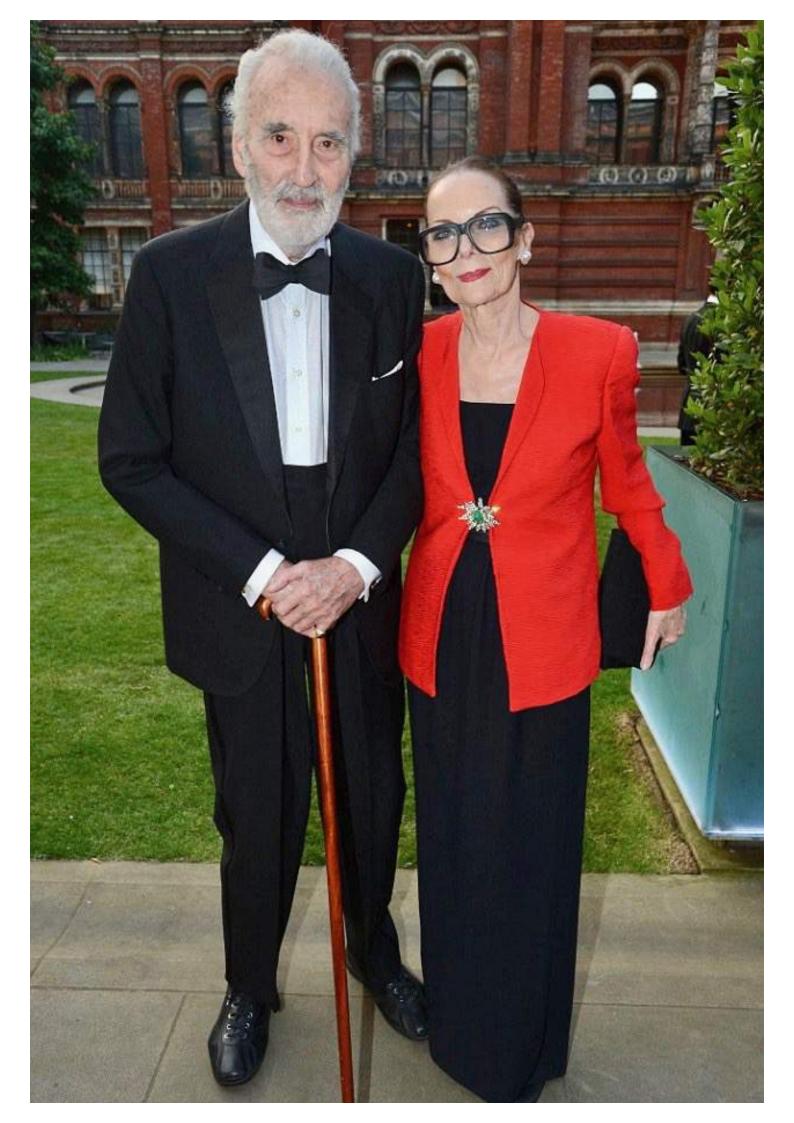
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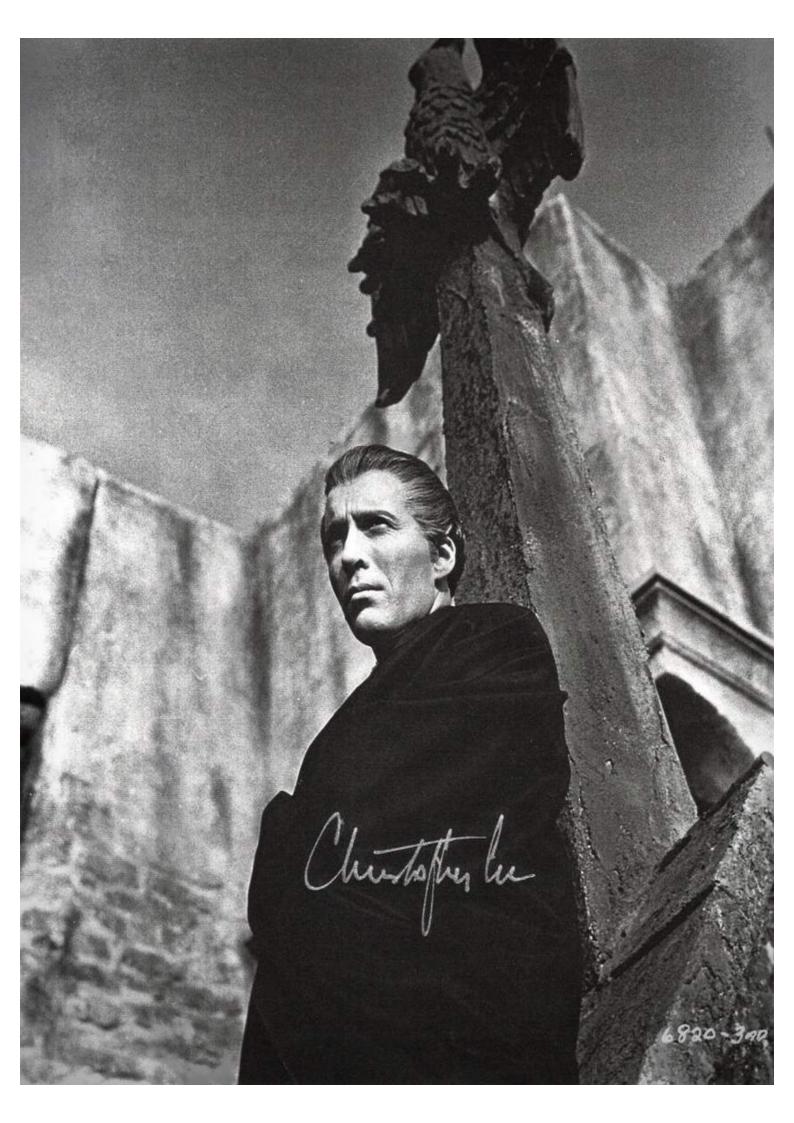
FOUR REELS

The Mysterious Fingerprint The Crook Detective FOUR REELS

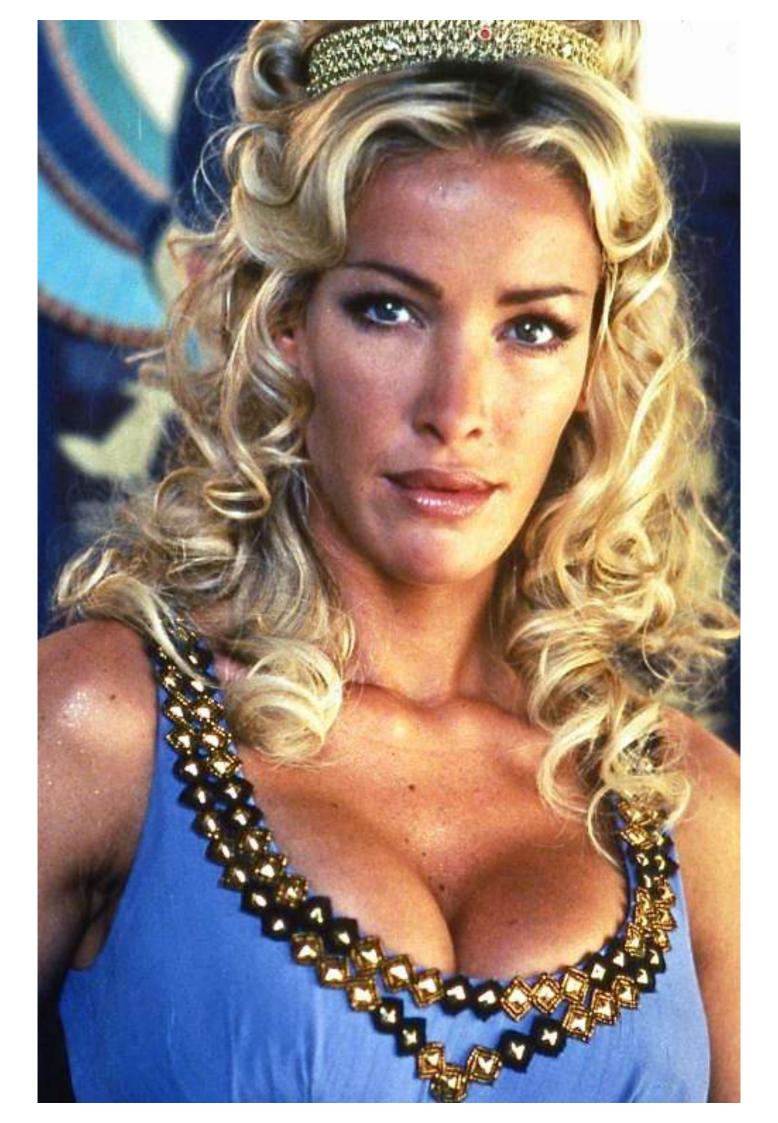






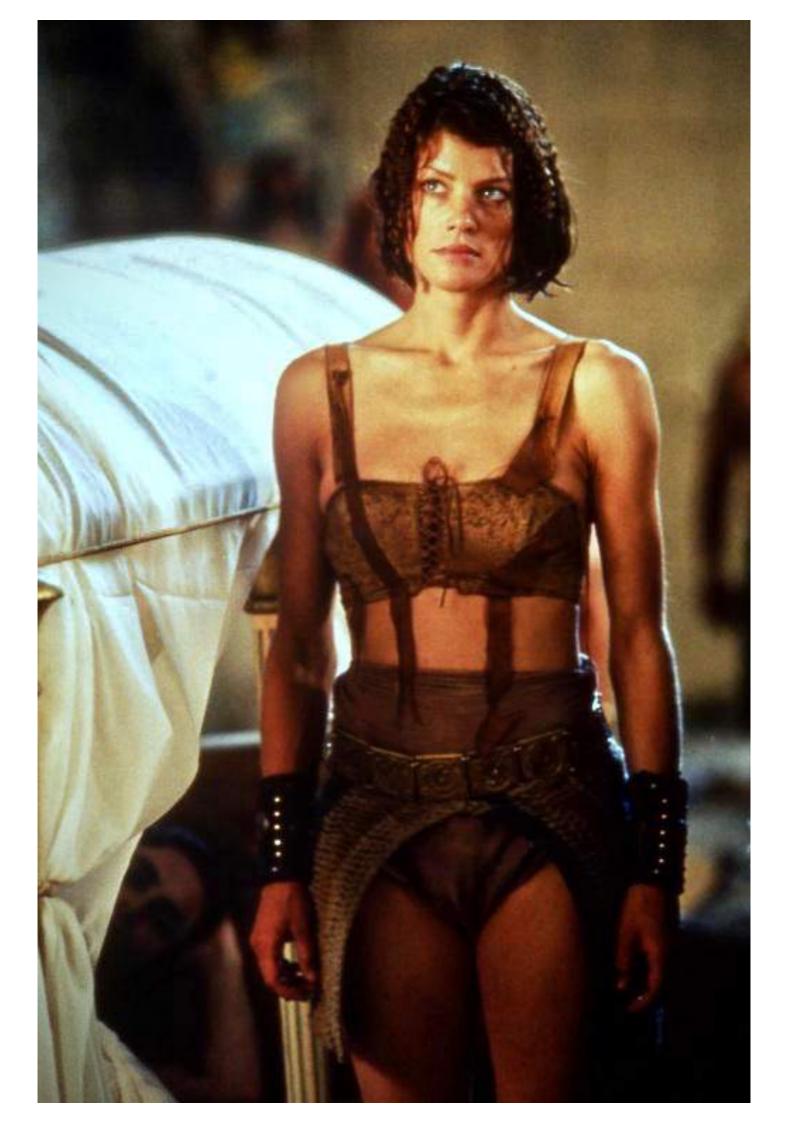


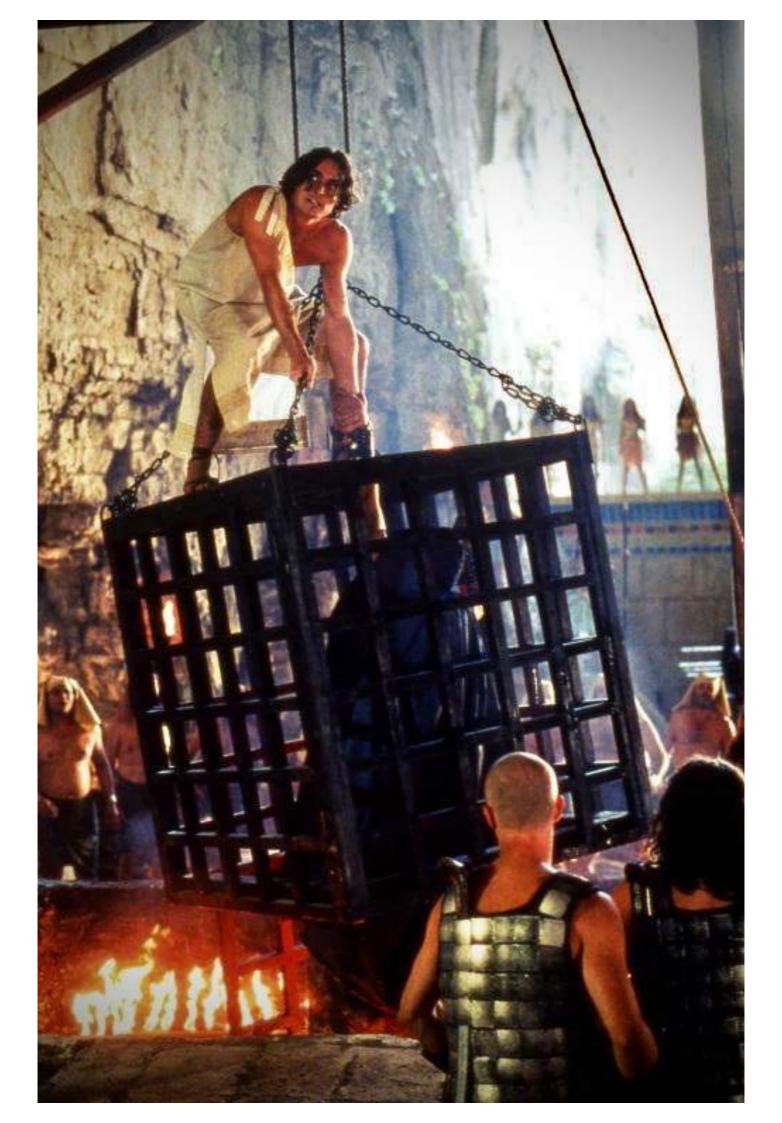
Universal Film S.A. Sabina SESSELMAN William SYLVESTER SCOTLAND (INFORMATION RECEIVED) à l'écoute*luistert ROBERT LYNN . Prod. por UNITED CO. PRODUCTIONS, LTD.





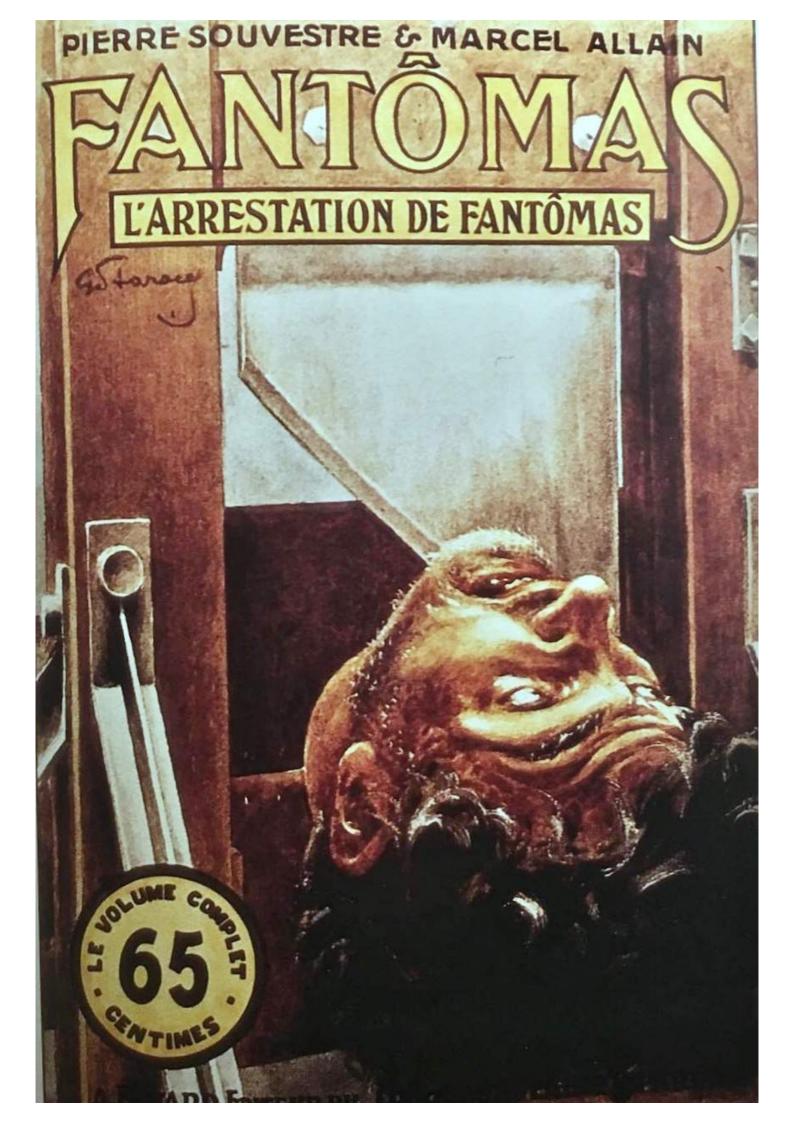


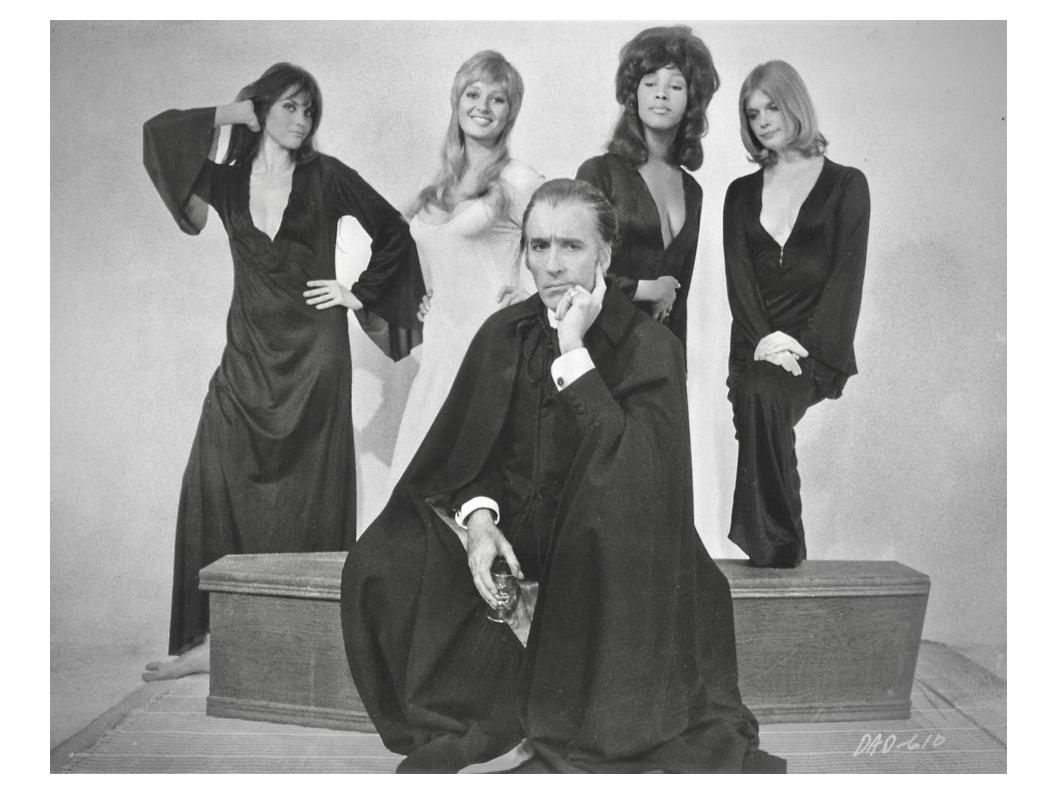












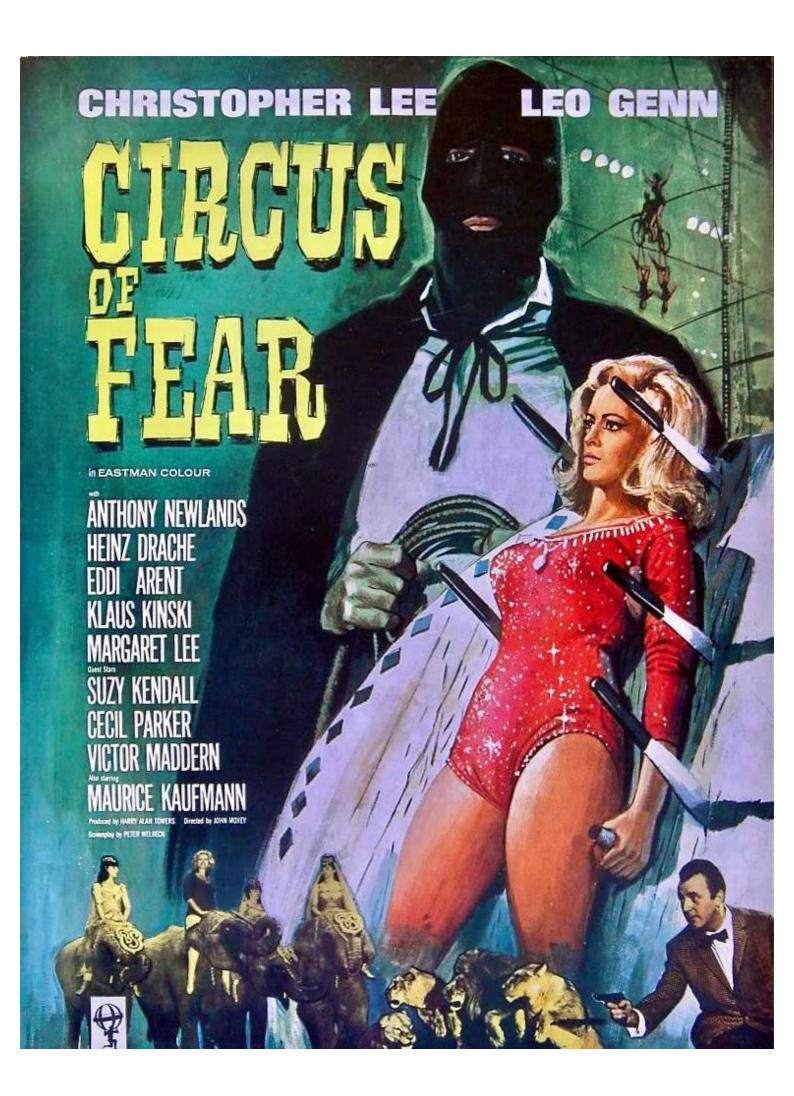










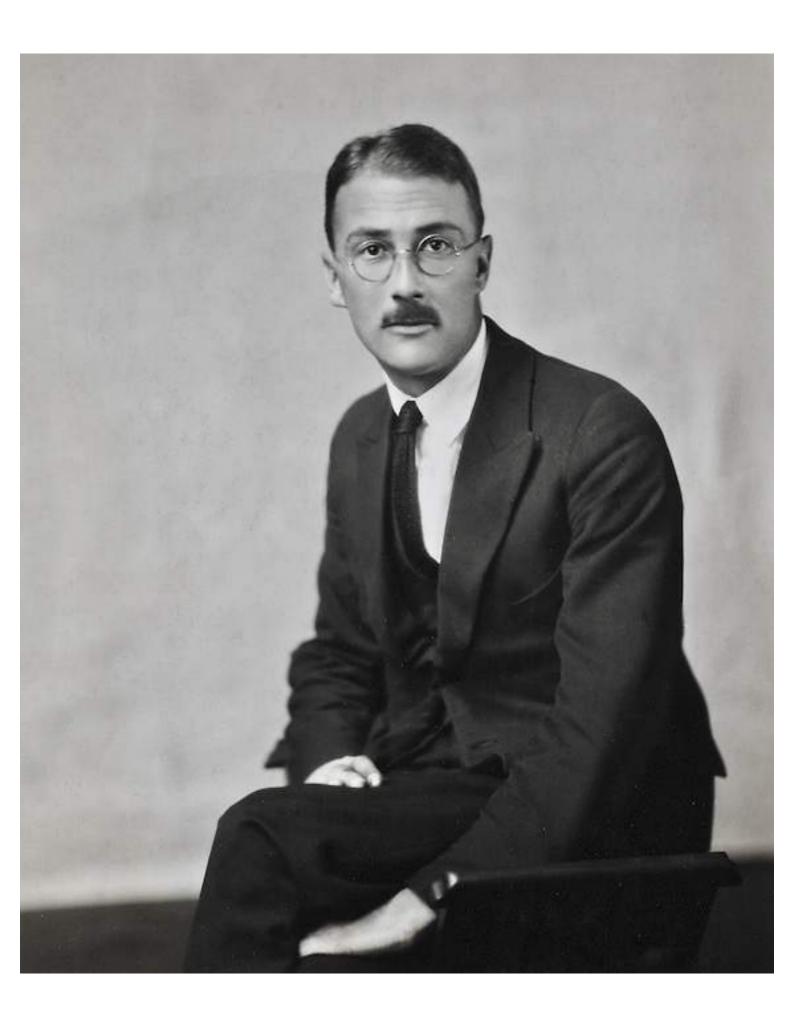




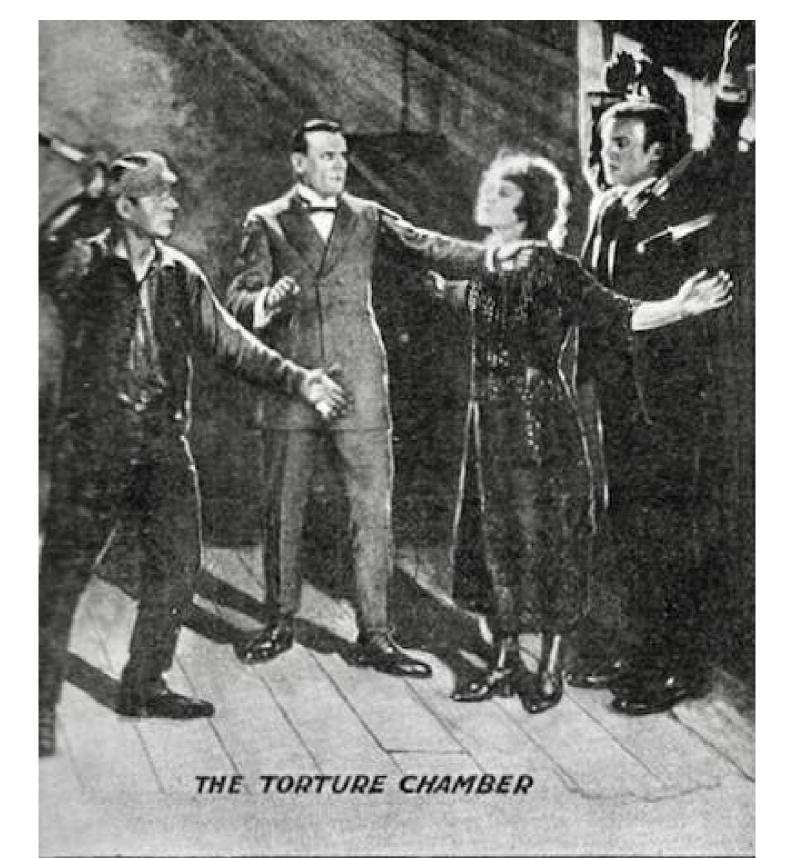
of the sky ... they fought for hidden diamonds ... sunken gold ... and a woman's desire!











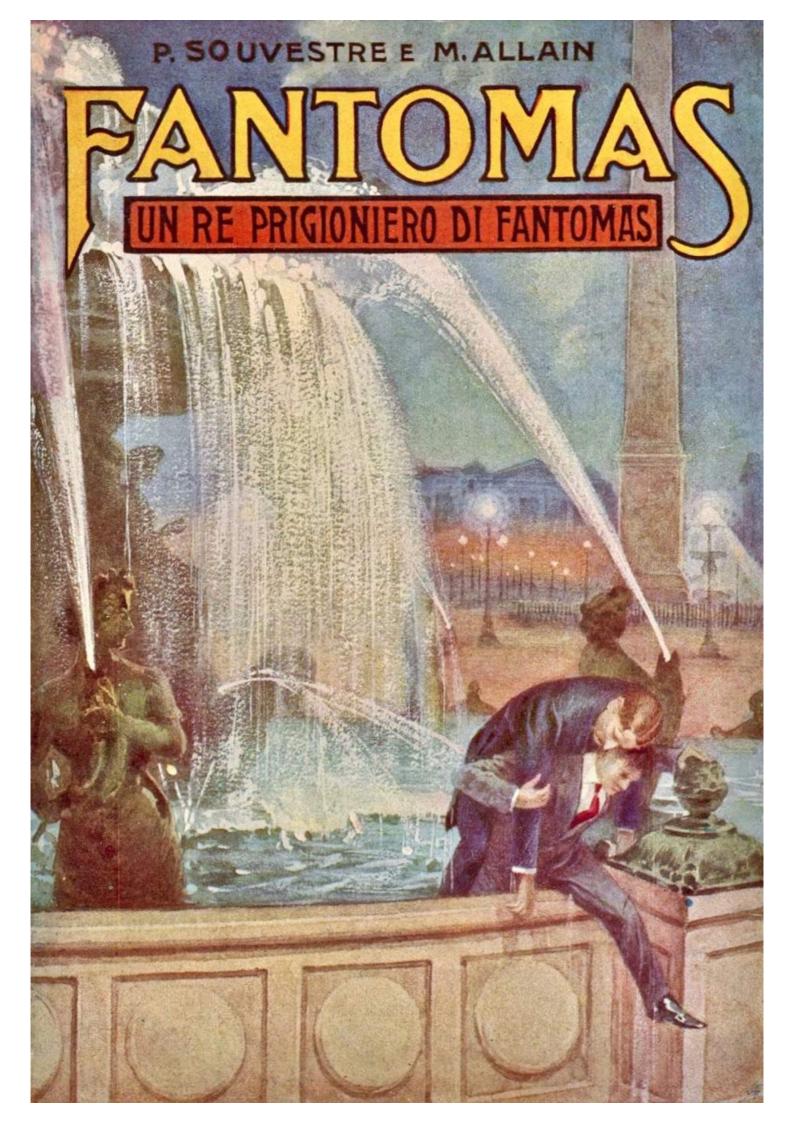
WILLIAM FOX PRESENTS

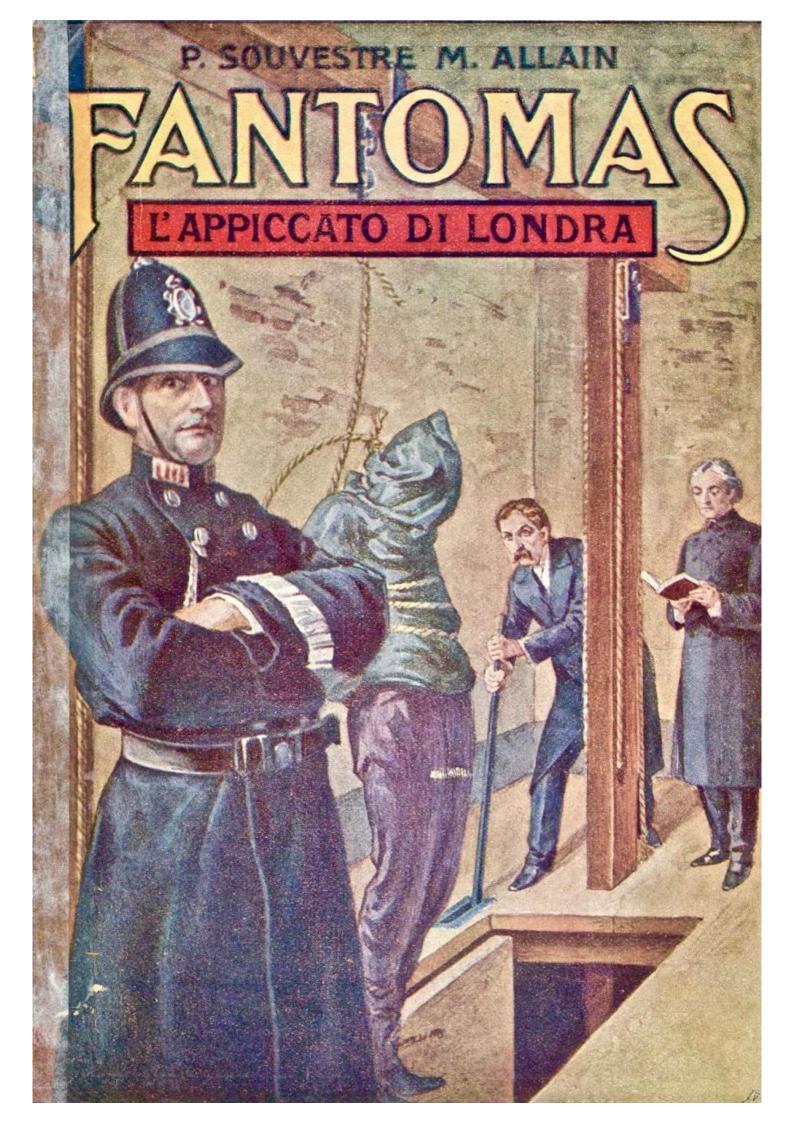
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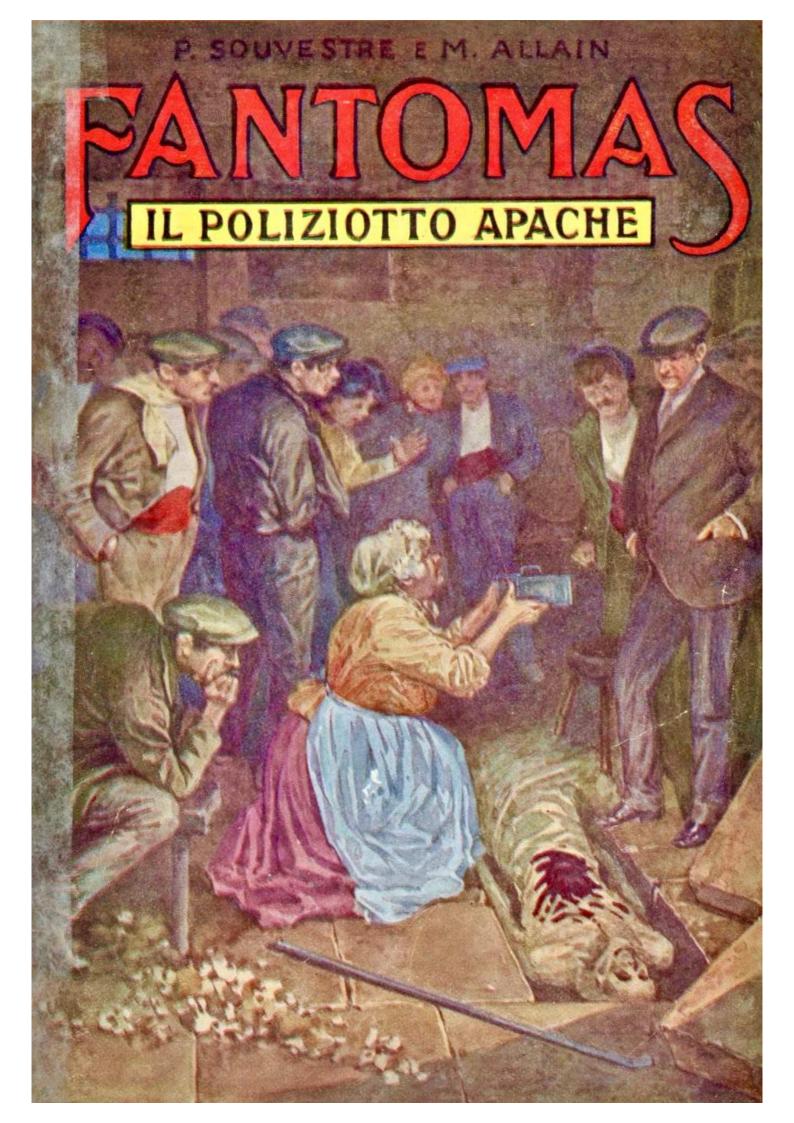




































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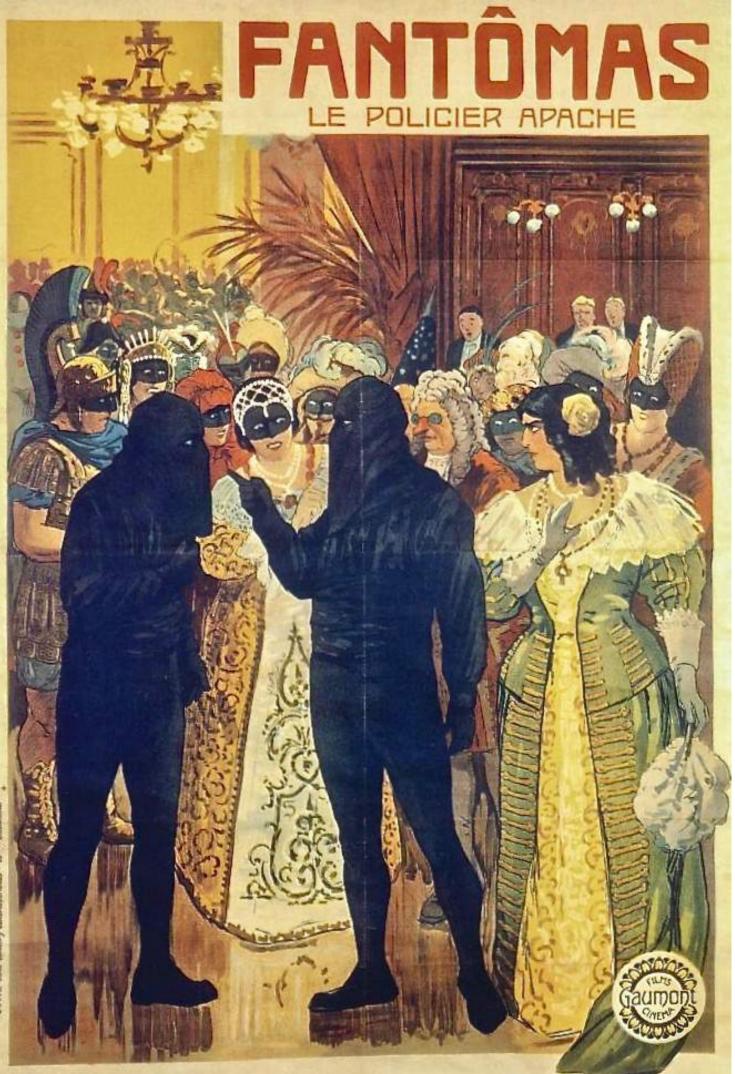


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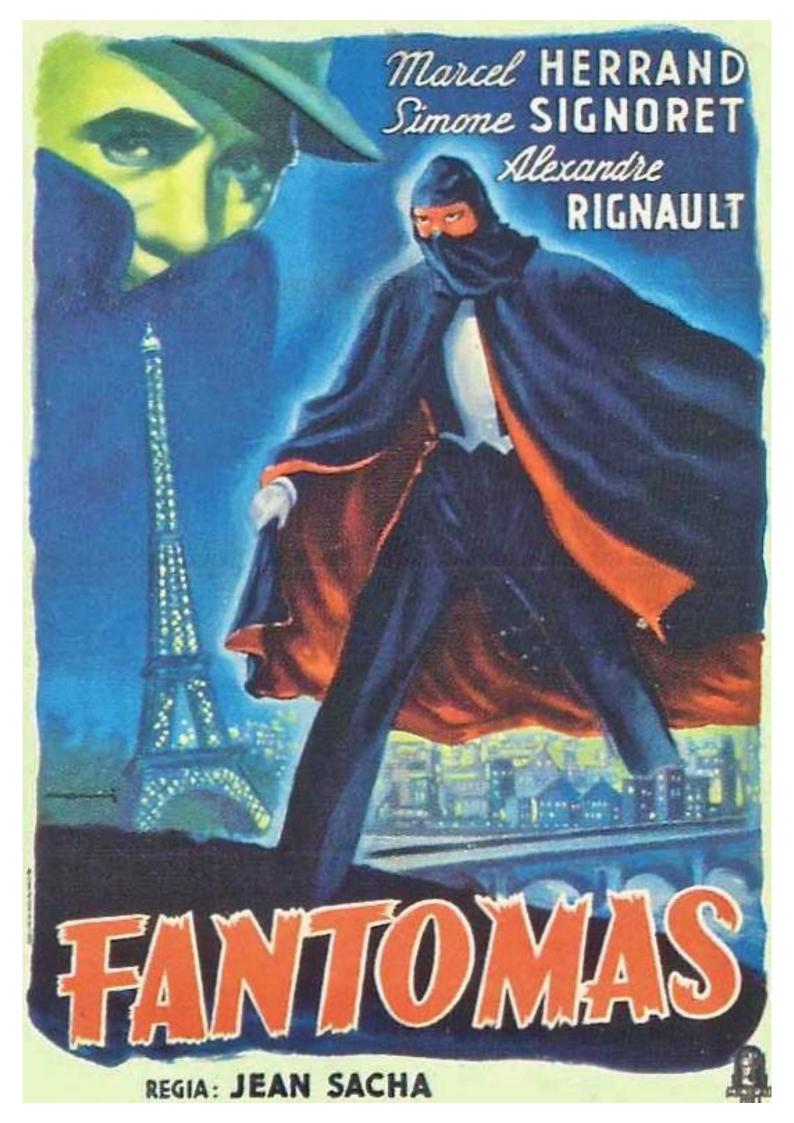
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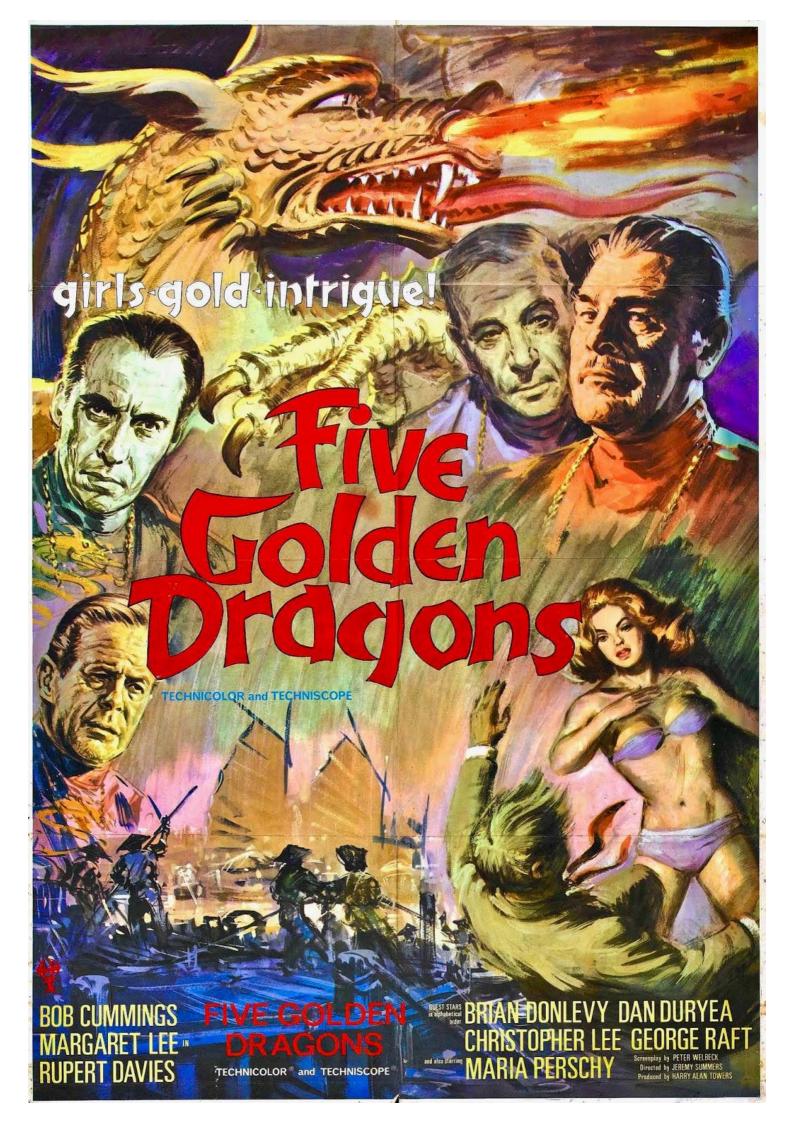




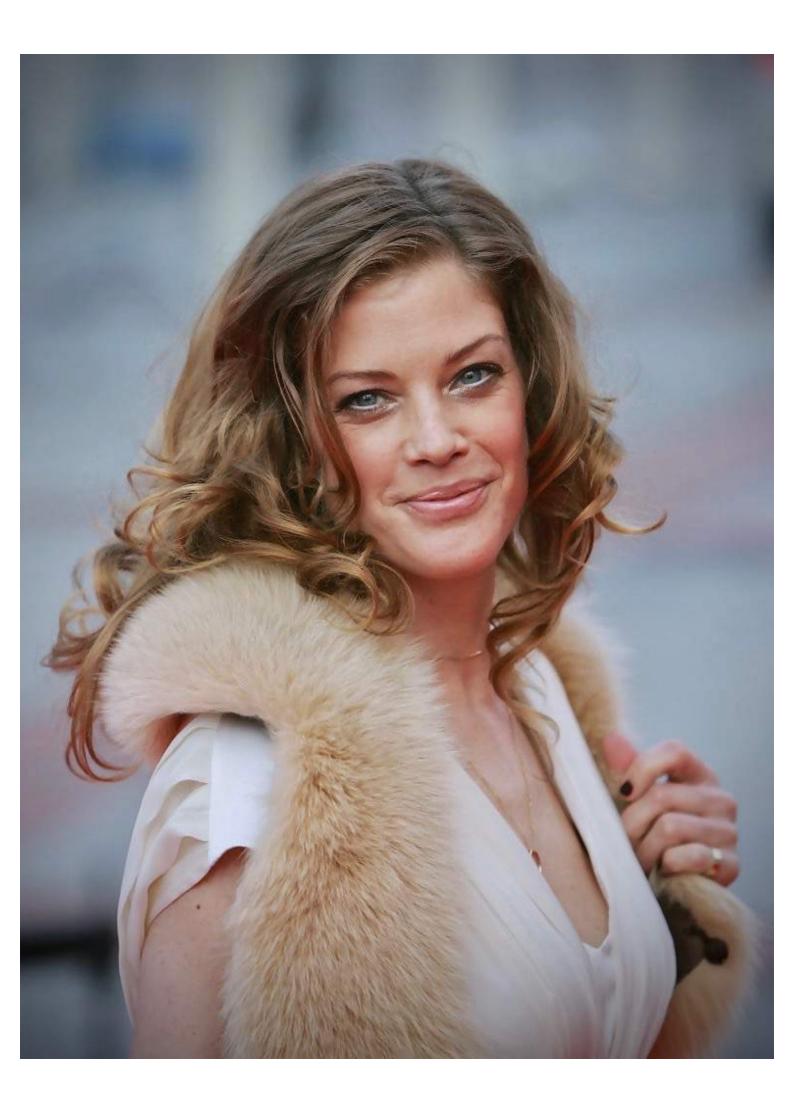
ANNUAL WAS DESCRIPTION OF WHICH WAS THE WAY



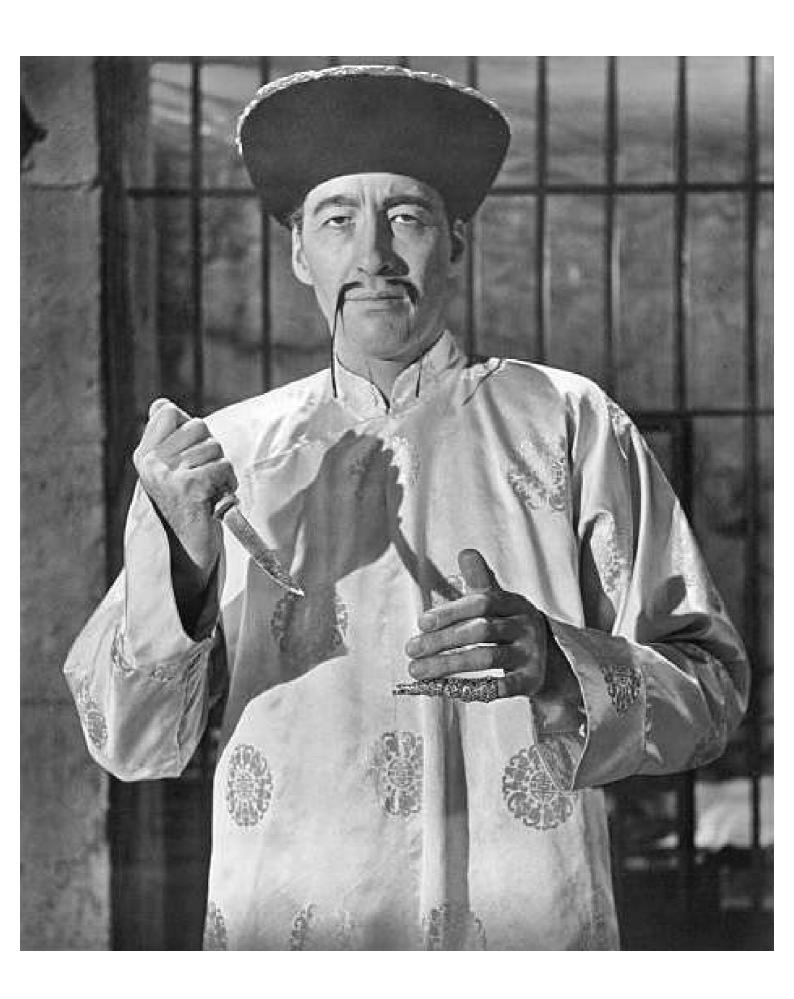


















FANTÔMAS





WILLIAM FOX PRESENTS

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EPISODE THREE

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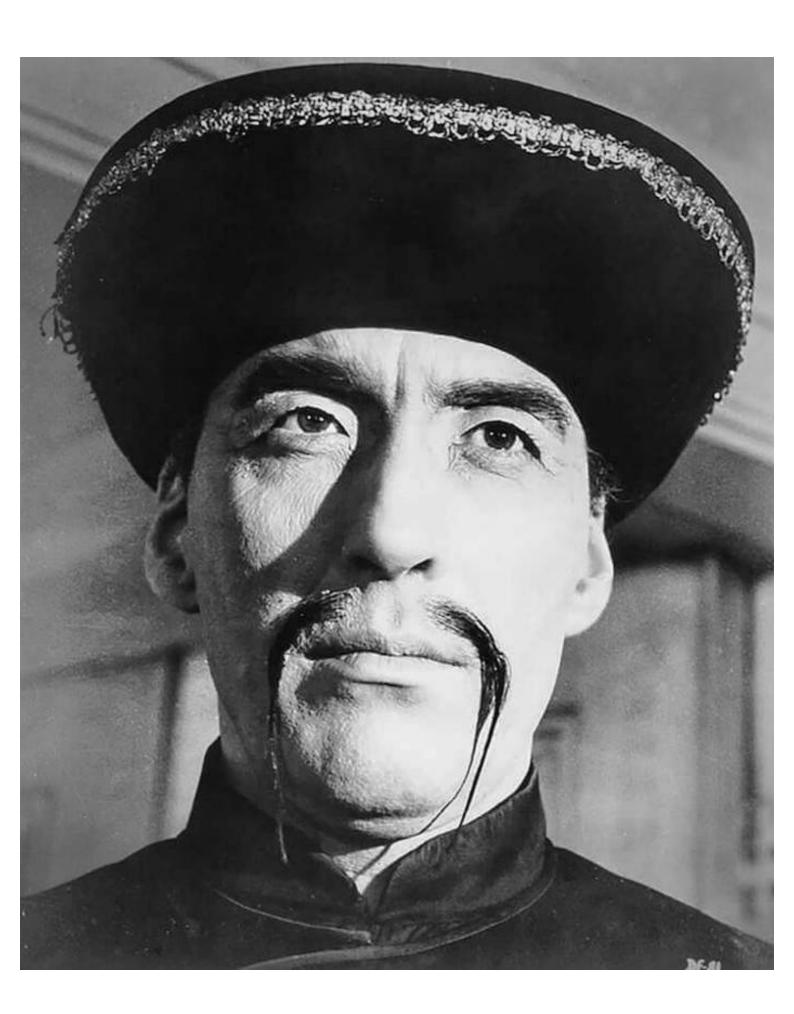










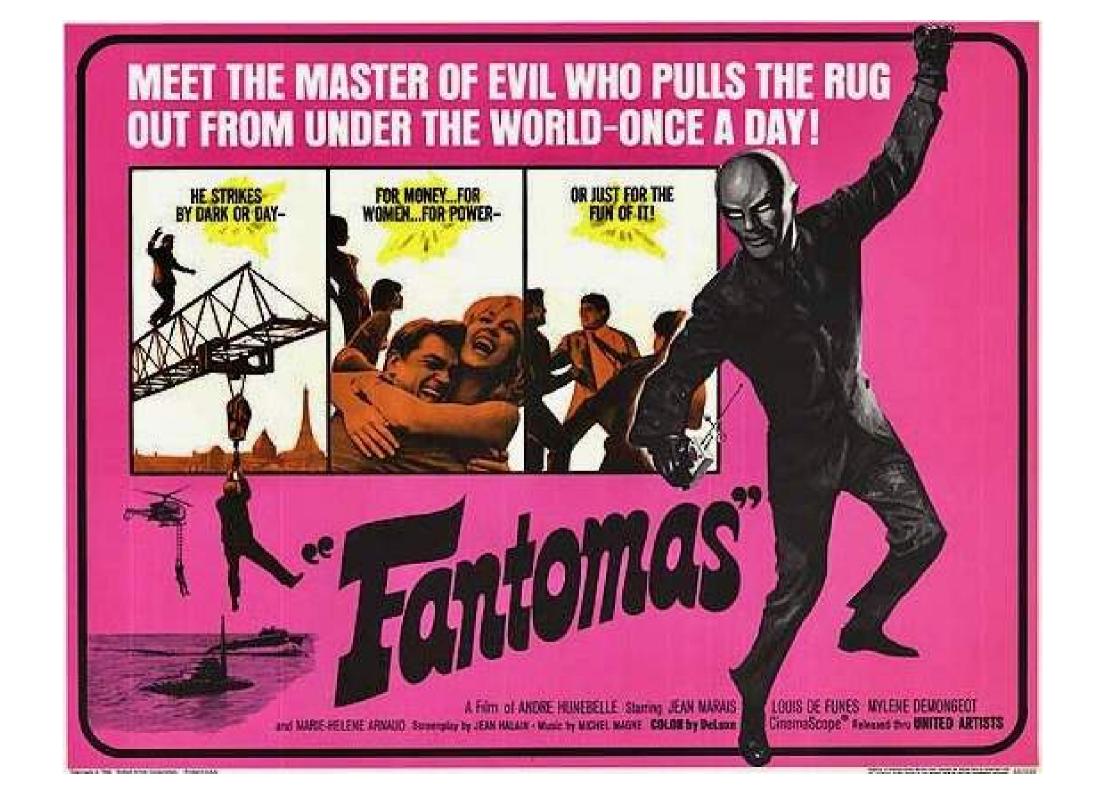


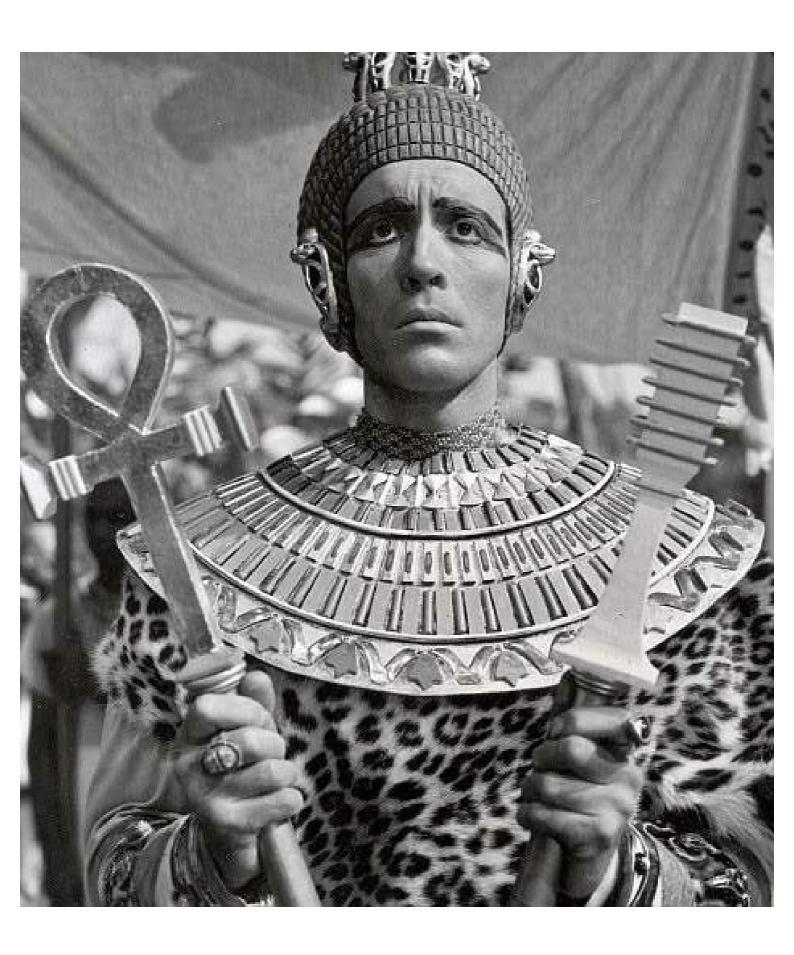


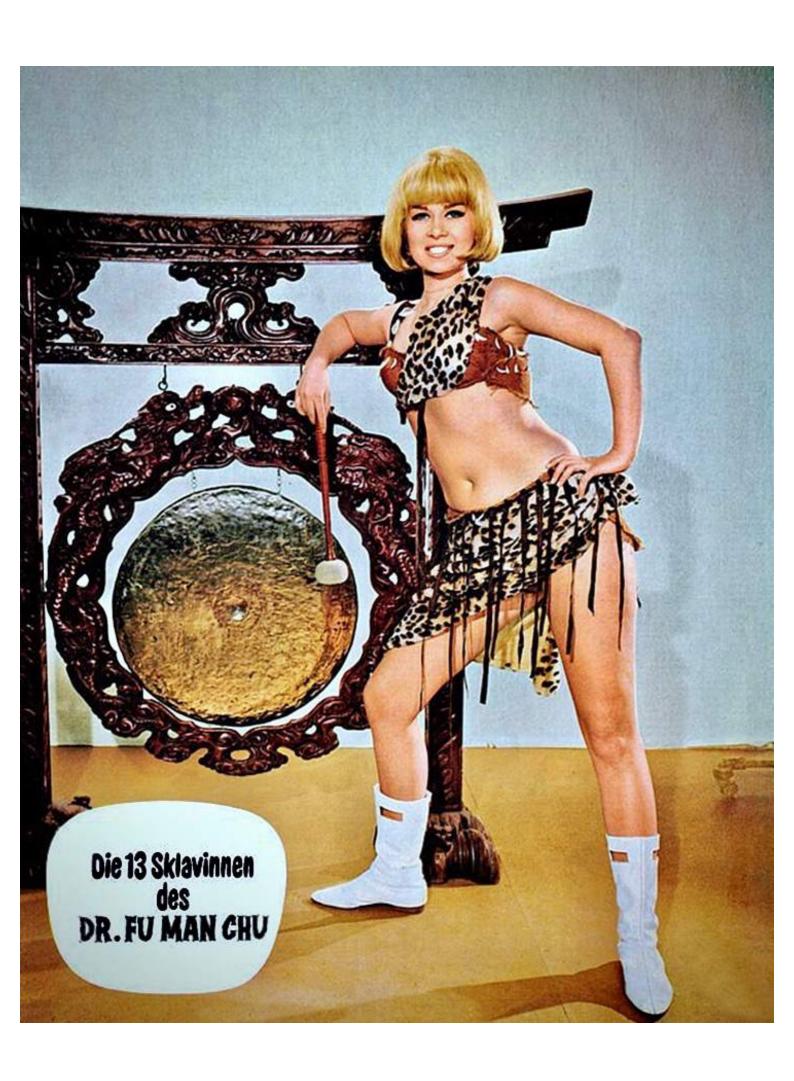






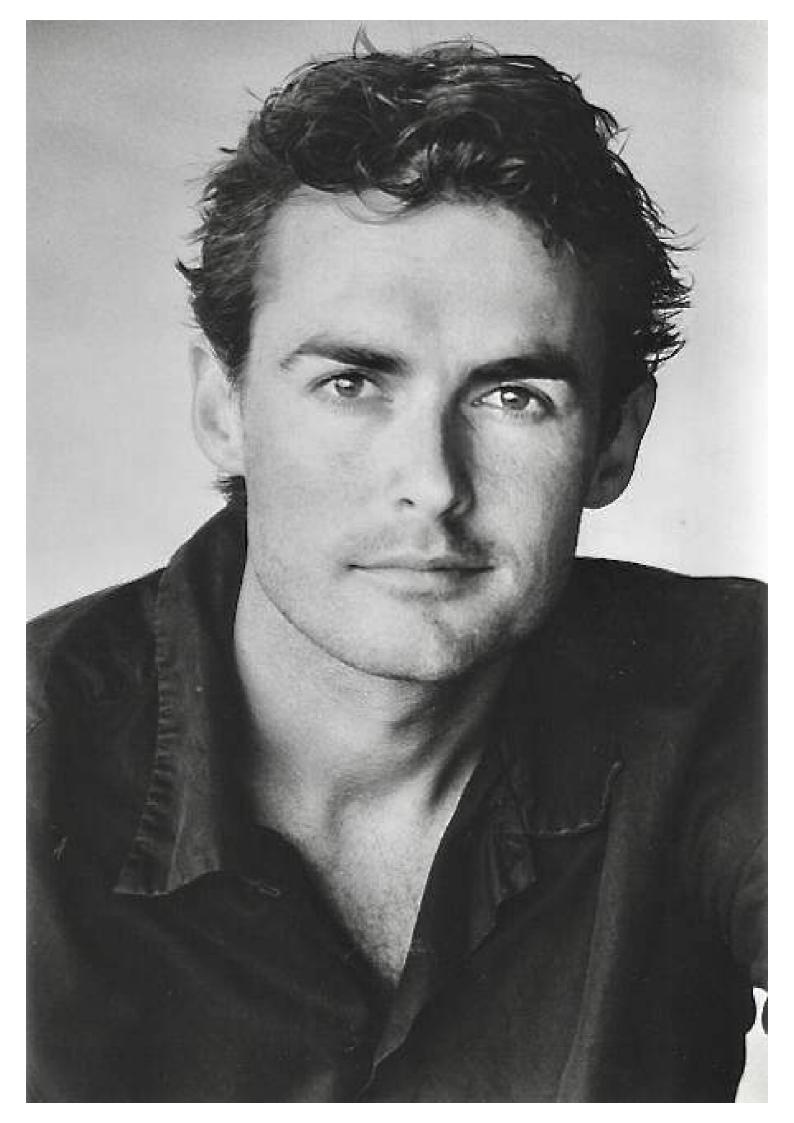


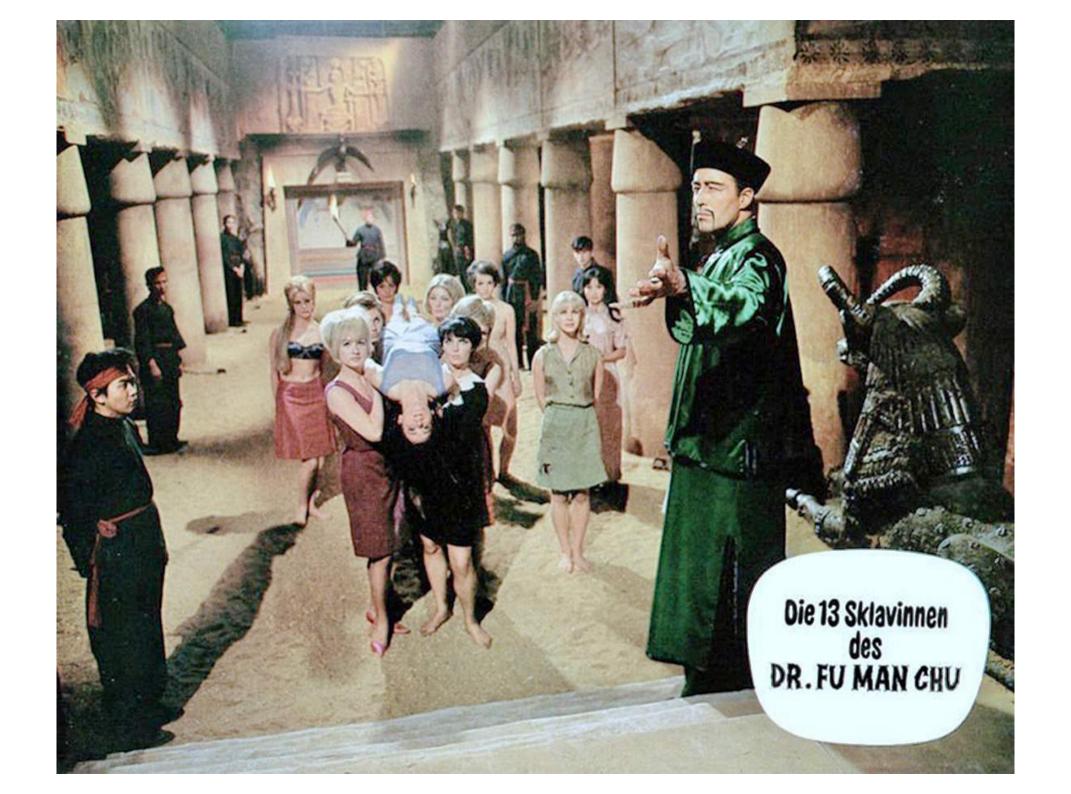














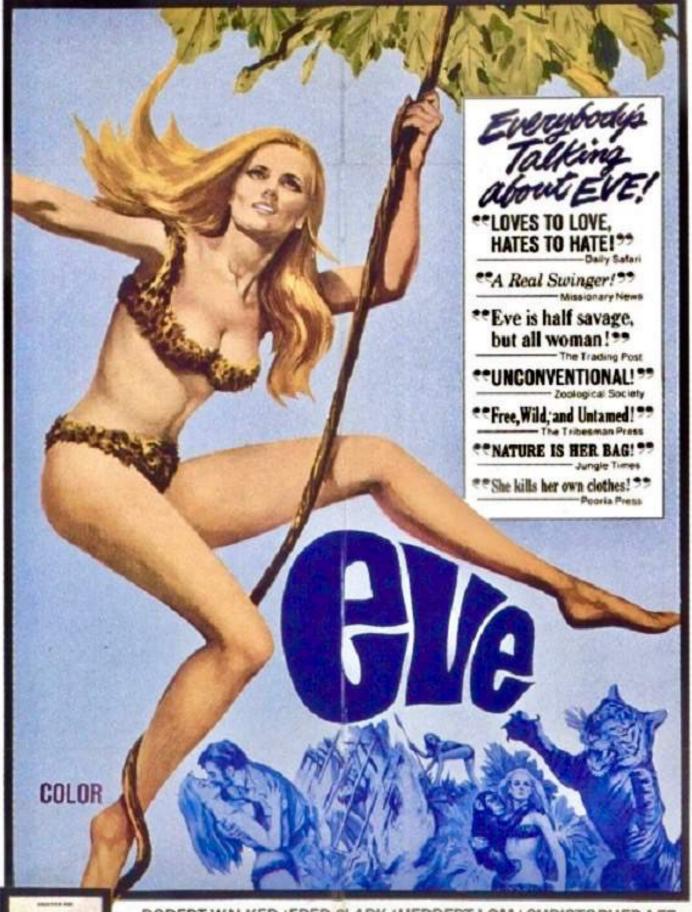








* The Original Flower Child*



G

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